

# Socialist Worker

For a socialist alternative to New Labour

80p

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# BUSH WANTS WAR AT ANY PRICE

● Inspections offer  
rejected **TWICE**

● Worldwide peace  
appeals ignored

# Fat cat pay soaring away

PUBLIC SECTOR workers on poverty pay are told that a 3 percent increase is enough.

But fat cat pay is going through the roof.

The number of executives grabbing over £500,000 a year is now at a record high of 487.

And 123 of these are on £1 million or more.

These 487 individuals rake in an obscene £429.8 million between them.

Directors earning over £500,000 a year have seen their pay soar by an average of 16.1 percent.

According to Labour Research, this means an "ever widening gap between boardroom pay and the rest of the workforce".

Most executives get a huge benefits package on top of their salaries.

Take, for example, top fat cat Martin Bandier, director at EMI music publishing.

## Bonus

His basic salary rose by 34.2 percent last year, reaching £2,045,400. His annual bonus went up 53.7 percent to £1,636,400.

Bandier also owns 155,060 EMI shares that would have provided him with £12,405 in dividends last year. He has a further 365,228 share options.

And don't forget his car and private health insurance.

# Bosses get a cash injection

A REPORT by the *Independent on Sunday* describes how "executive rewards are in danger of spiralling out of control and company directors will soon be paying themselves more than £1 billion a year".

This survey is based on the published accounts of the FTSE 360 index of companies and shows how much a whole board is paid, not just individual fat cats.

It shows that total boardroom pay has risen by 105 percent since 1997. It is now £881 million.

One of the highest rises in executive pay was at PowderJet, where top bosses' pay rose by 679 percent.

PowderJet hit the headlines when it won a contract to produce a controversial smallpox vaccine after its director made a donation to the Labour Party.

# Agencies profit, workers suffer

"FLEXIBLE Britain" is New Labour's dream of a society where workers have no rights, no security and no certain future.

That world is coming ever closer, according to new reports.

More and more bosses are taking advantage of employment agencies.

The number of workers placed with employers by agencies increased by 47 percent between 1997 and 2000.

According to the TUC, 18 percent of temporary workers are supplied by agencies, compared to only 7 percent eight years ago.

Another survey found 28 percent of workplaces employ agency staff.

This is good news for recruitment agency management who charge commissions of between 10 and 25 percent, making huge profits.

Hays Personnel Services, for example, made £124 million last year.

The British Nursing Co-operations group made over £15 million.

The spread of agency work is bad news for workers.

Permanent posts are being replaced by agency contracts involving less rights to paid leave, lower pay and no pension schemes.

Simon Jones was killed on his first day as an agency worker on Shoreham docks in 1998.

# Blair smiles do not stop crisis

A FLAGSHIP Private Finance Initiative (PFI) hospital was officially opened by Tony Blair last week.

But the occasion was spoilt by the hospital's admission that on the very day of the ceremony an important operation was cancelled due to bed shortages.

This is just the latest in a long line of problems at the University Hospital in North Durham.

The plans for 600 beds were scaled down to 454,

causing fears of bed shortages before a single patient had been received.

The hospital's own chief executive, Steven Martin, admitted that if the hospital was built again more beds would be needed.

■ **ANOTHER new PFI hospital, Hairmyres, outside Glasgow, has been open for just over a year.**

**It has just closed half its theatres to carry out urgently needed repairs.**



**NEXT week Trevor Ngwane and 86 others go on trial in Johannesburg, South Africa, for protesting against electricity and water cut-offs and evictions. They face jail.**

■ **Protest, Thursday 15 August, 4.30pm, Trafalgar Square, London (details on page 15).**

■ **Read Trevor Ngwane in next week's Socialist Worker on the global struggle against capitalism and what's happening in South Africa.**

**STOP THE BNP NAZIS... STOP THE BNP NAZIS...**

# Keep building the carnival

## BLOCK HATE RALLY

THE BNP wants to hold its Hitler-worshipping event—the Red, White and Blue rally—in Sawley in Lancashire.

Villagers in Diggle scuppered the BNP's attempts to organise the hate event there, forcing the BNP to look for another venue.

The Red, White and Blue rally is promoted as a "family event".

But last year concealed cameras filmed acts making jokes about the Holocaust and encouraging racism. The audience loved this.

The event is designed to "harden up" BNP members for "the battles to come".

■ **Protest against the Nazi rally—assemble 8am, Saturday 17 August, opposite Rose County Foods, Gisburn Road, Sawley (near Clitheroe, off the A59).**

**BURNLEY'S Labour council has moved to stop the Anti Nazi League holding its "Love Music—Hate Racism" carnival in the town.**

The ANL is vigorously fighting this disgraceful decision. But there is absolutely no doubt that the carnival will be going ahead, and in the north west of England.

An alternative venue has already been planned in Manchester's Platt

Fields Park.

The free event will feature a series of major performers. The line-up is definitely confirmed.

Headlining is Ms Dynamite, who performed at the closing ceremony of the recent Commonwealth Games in Manchester.

Other top name acts include Doves and The Shining.

The event is designed to oppose the Nazis and fight racism. There is no better place for it than in

Burnley where three BNP Nazis managed to con people into electing them as councillors in May.

A carnival would bring people together and boost the confidence of the big majority who hate everything the BNP stands for.

It is deeply shocking that the leaders of Burnley's Labour council want to stop the event.

Why is Stuart Caddy, the Labour leader of Burnley council, taking the political decision to

stop the event?

The best response to the manoeuvres by the council is for everyone to throw themselves into making sure the carnival is as big as possible.

Together we can defeat the BNP's attempts to whip up racism, divide and terrorise communities, smash trade unions and undermine democracy.

■ **Complain to Stuart Caddy, leader of Burnley council, by phoning 01282 425 011, or write to him c/o Town Hall, Manchester Road, Burnley BB11 1JA, or e-mail scaddy@burnley.gov.uk.**

# Police assist a Nazi to speak in Burnley



THE AUTHORITIES allowed the BNP's former Führer, John Tyndall, to hold a meeting in Burnley last week.

What a contrast to the way the carnival has been treated!

Tyndall (pictured left) is the man who said, "Hitler's *Mein Kampf* was a revelation. These were the words of a seer and prophet."

He added, "Many who feel Hitler was right do not believe it is yet safe to state such views openly. But times will change, and yesterday's heresy will become tomorrow's truth."

Tyndall's meeting took place on Thursday of last week at the Falcon pub in the centre of Burnley.

It could not have gone ahead without a huge police presence to defend him from protesters. Police resources were deployed from across Lancashire.

Over 100 police, including mounted officers, surrounded the venue.

Tyndall attracted only long-standing Nazis, including failed BNP candidate Mick Treacey and thugs from the Nazi terror group Combat 18.

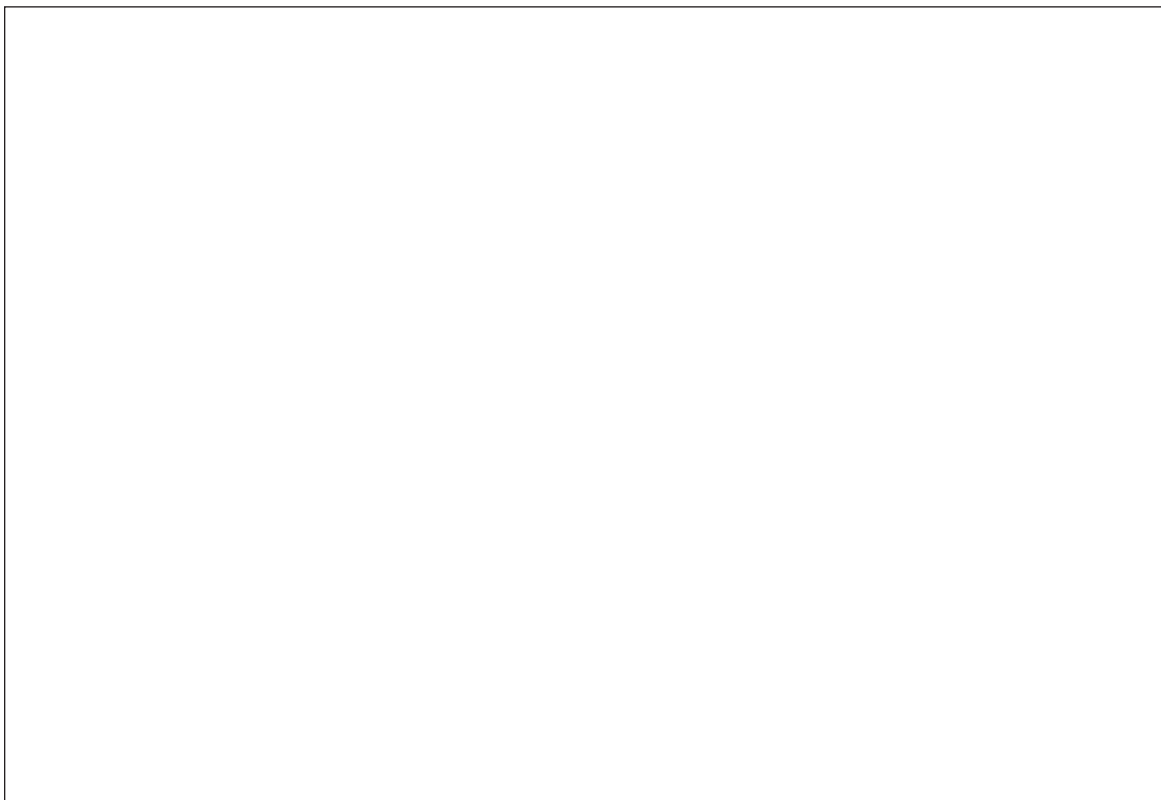
Protesters organised by the Anti Nazi League took to the streets to oppose the meeting.

The protest won wide support from passers-by.



# Mad logic of US global dominance

## BELFAST MASS ANTI-SECTARIAN RALLY



Picture: PA PHOTOS

UP TO 5,000 people, including many trade unionists, protested against sectarianism outside Belfast City Hall in Northern Ireland on Friday of last week. Turn to page 14 for the full story.

## Sign up for anti-capitalism in Florence

**THE RIGHT** wing axis of Blair, Berlusconi and Aznar has united to drive privatisation policies through Europe. Now Blair hopes to turn their axis into one that backs the US war.

Even Germany's leader Gerhard Schröder has come out against the war on Iraq.

These two issues, war and privatisation, are at the centre of the European Social Forum which

is being held in Florence, Italy, in November.

Tens of thousands of trade unionists and activists from Britain and across Europe will be there to plan resistance and launch an opposition movement.

The executive of the RMT rail workers' union is the latest group to sponsor the conference. RMT leader Bob Crow will be joining the official delegation to Florence.

You can now register for this important event on the website [www.fse-esf.org](http://www.fse-esf.org).

There is a sliding scale payment from 10 euros (around £6.50).

This means you can secure your own place and encourage others to sign up. Transport is being organised from all around Britain.

To find out more phone the Mobilisation for the European Social Forum on 020 7053 2072.

### WHY IS George Bush so hell bent on a war on Iraq?

The US devastated Iraq in a war 11 years ago. US-backed economic sanctions have already killed 500,000 Iraqi children, according to Unicef.

A US war on Iraq risks destabilising the Middle East and sparking wider wars.

It looks mad, but behind Bush's crazy logic stands his desire to have a war to assert US dominance around the globe.

He wants a world where US political interests come first and multinationals can race after profits, all backed up by US B-52 bombers and troops.

The Middle East has 75 percent of the world's oil reserves, making it of major strategic importance to the US, the world's most powerful military and economic machine.

The US economy threatens to nosedive into recession under the weight of financial scandals that stretch right to the Republican administration.

Bush's vulnerability on domestic issues could press him to launch all-out war on Iraq to shore up support at home.

**Over 6,000 children and their parents in Afghanistan have already been killed in the first wave of Bush's so-called "war on terrorism".**

Many people are horrified at his bloodlust over Iraq.

In Britain we can play a vital role in upsetting his relentless war drive.

Bush relies on Tony Blair as his recruiting sergeant.

But Bush and Blair embark on this war weaker than in the 1991 Gulf War.

Then there was a coalition of 21 countries backing the war.

Today's international coalition is the US, Blair and the right wing leaders Berlusconi in Italy and Aznar in

Spain.

Even Douglas Hurd, who was the gung-ho Tory foreign secretary during the last Gulf War, said this week, "It is hard to believe that a massive invasion lasting weeks would get the support it would need if its aim was to install a pro-Western government in Iraq."

Leaders from the major trade unions have spoken out against the war.

Former military chiefs have expressed their doubts and church leaders have launched their biggest opposition to British military action since the Suez crisis.

**The popular demonstrations against the war on Afghanistan and in support of Palestine have shown the wide support for an anti-war movement.**

This growing movement could force Blair to withdraw his support for Bush's war.

This would remove Bush's key prop and deal his plans a very serious blow.

A Channel 4 poll this week revealed that 52 percent of people are opposed to British military involvement in any US war on Iraq.

Anti-war activists have to urgently build on that groundswell of opposition to take on Blair and Bush.

Blair has increased military spending by £1 billion while public services are crying out for cash.

Britain faces the real threat of recession with manufacturing output already at its lowest level since 1979.

The anti-war demonstration on 28 September is a great opportunity to show the wide opposition to the war.

Already anti-war activists are mobilising, with 30 coaches booked from Glasgow alone.

Everyone in workplaces, trade unions and communities needs to start mobilising now to make that protest in seven weeks time as big as possible.

# LOVE MUSIC HATE RACISM

## SUNDAY 1 SEPTEMBER

### MS DYNAMITE\*DOVES

### THE SHINING\*HEARTLESS CREW

### NICKY BLACKMARKET & MC FOXY\*RODNEY P & SKITZ

### MISS BLACK AMERICA\*PHI-LIFE CYPHER\*PLUS MANY MORE

### TWO STAGES, DANCE MARQUEE, KIDS AREA, STALLS, FOOD AND DRINK

Organised by the Anti Nazi League  
020 7924 0333 ● [www.anl.org.uk](http://www.anl.org.uk)  
● [anl@anl.org.uk](mailto:anl@anl.org.uk)

CARNIVAL AGAINST THE NAZIS



## comment

# Jenin faces a new struggle for the truth

REPORTS OF war crimes began circulating within days of Israeli tanks rolling into the Palestinian refugee camp of Jenin in April this year.

There were dozens of eyewitness accounts of people buried alive as their homes were bulldozed, and of women and children shot dead in the streets.

The friends and families of the victims had to wait for four months until the UN produced a report on events in Jenin.

The report has serious weaknesses.

It became known as the "Google Report", after the internet search engine.

The Israeli government blocked the UN team from carrying out their own investigations, so they had to rely on reports available on the internet.

The UN report was also carefully written so as not to cause offence to the Israeli government or its allies in the White House.

Israeli officials have seized on the fact that the report does not say Palestinians were massacred in Jenin.

UN officials admit they deliberately did not use the word "massacre" in the report, claiming it is "too emotionally charged".

## Happy

It was a political decision. UN officials were happy to describe as a massacre the killing of 45 Albanians by Serb forces in the village of Racak in February 1999.

The US and NATO seized on that in their build-up to war against Serbia.

But despite this manipulation the UN team has revealed evidence of atrocities committed by the Israeli army against Palestinian civilians.

It found that during the Israeli incursions into Palestinian territories between 1 March and 7 May this year:

- Some 497 Palestinians were killed and 1,477 were injured, much higher than previous official estimates.

- Around 17,000 Palestinians were left homeless when their houses were blown up or bulldozed by Israeli forces.

- As many as 630,000 Palestinians faced food shortages as food was cut off.

- Up to \$361 million worth of damage was done to Palestinian infrastructure.

- Some 50 schools were damaged or destroyed during the Israeli incursions, including 15 turned into detention centres to hold the thousands arrested, and 11 that were vandalised.

Curfews were imposed on around one million Palestinians, including 220,000 for longer than a week.

**The army systematically used Palestinian civilians as human shields.**

In relation to the Jenin camp, the UN team noted that out of a population of 14,000 some 47 percent were either children or elderly.

The report highlights how, during the Israeli occupation from 3 to 18 April, the Israeli army prevented medical teams from reaching the injured, "endangering many lives".

It refers to the case of

## JUDY COX unpicks the United Nations report into Israeli army atrocities

Fadwana Jamma.

She was a nurse in full uniform who was shot dead as she tended a wounded man.

The findings give only a very limited picture of the atrocities committed by the Israeli forces.

**The UN first promised to investigate reports of Israeli war crimes thoroughly.**

But when the Israeli government refused to allow the UN investigators to "go in" they meekly accepted the decision.

Not only were the team prevented from making their own investigations in Jenin, they also refused to speak to other groups that did.

The independent Human Rights Watch organisation visited the camp just after the army pulled out.

They found evidence of Israeli war crimes.

But the UN team did not talk to them.

Instead they relied on Israeli government statements as much as they relied on what human rights activists and journalists witnessed.

So the report repeats the Israeli government's claims that the army "clearly took all measures not to hurt civilian life".

Then it notes that some eyewitnesses "assert that soldiers did not take all possible measures to avoid hurting civilians".

## Facts

The report holds the Israeli army, with its huge firepower, and Palestinian militants who resisted them equally responsible for the deaths of civilians.

This attempt to maintain a neutral position flies in face of the facts.

So the report does not mention cases carefully documented at the time.

These include the case of 14 year old Faris Zebein, who was shot dead when he went shopping during a lifting of the curfew.

Nor does it mention the case of Afaf Desuqi, who was blown apart by Israeli soldiers as she hurried to open her door to them.

And it does not refer to Kemal Zughayer, shot dead as he tried to escape from Israeli soldiers in his wheelchair.

The UN was trying not to anger the Israeli government by telling the whole truth about Jenin.

But as the *Guardian* commented, "The destruction wrought in Jenin looked and smelled like a crime. On the basis of the UN's findings, it still does."

# inside the system

## Scrap the public

THE government has staked its reputation on improving public services.

But according to the government's People's Panel public satisfaction with most services is falling.

Satisfaction among tenants about council housing, for example, has dropped from 73 percent to 49 percent.

The People's Panel was hailed as proof of New Labour's commitment to public involvement.

But if the public get it wrong, politicians can always scrap the public.

The People's Panel has now been axed.

The government complained that members of the panel were becoming too "interested and knowledgeable".

★ POLITICIANS in the US like to pose as the great defenders of democracy.

But after George Bush's debacle during the presidential election come Anthony Williams's celebrity nominees.

Williams was the Democratic mayor of Washington.

He was planning to stand for re-election this autumn.

Among those signing the petition to enter him as a candidate were US secretary of state Donald Rumsfeld and Tony Blair.

The actor Dudley Moore was so keen that, despite being dead, he signed twice.

★ EAST Midlands Parkway is a new railway station between Nottingham and Derby, and the East Midlands train operator has scheduled trains to stop at the station.

The only problem is that the station hasn't actually been built yet.

Trains have to hang around for a few minutes because of the phantom station.

✉ Thanks to readers in Derby.

# Wish we were there

LOOKING FOR a cheap last-minute holiday?

Your MP probably isn't.

MPs are too busy signing up for "fact-finding" freebies.

One group of MPs are off on a £100,000 trip to Florida, to investigate the effects of all those lovely sun-rays on pensioners' skin.

Shadow chancellor Michael Howard is off to the paradise island of Mauritius on a ten-day trip.

When his office was asked the purpose of the trip the reply was, "I think it's something to do with the Com-

monwealth."

The Home Affairs Committee are jetting off to the Costa del Sol to check out crime links.

South Africa is the chosen destination of the Foreign Affairs Committee, led by Donald Anderson MP. They are going to investigate the "political climate" there.

Around £1 million will be spent on finding out all these important facts. Funny how no one needs to find facts somewhere cold, dark and miserable.

Around 40 percent of British people do not get an annual holiday.



★ MALE golfers at a club frequented by the Duke of York have been given a hard choice.

A magistrate has told them they must either give women voting rights or lose their licence to drink alcohol.

Major Nigel Carrington Smith, club secretary, remained calm in the face of this assault on male chauvinist piggery.

He said, "I doubt the women will bother to vote. They are very happy with the way the club is run."

## Caring face of Tories?

IAIN DUNCAN Smith claims to want an inclusive, caring Tory party.

Yet Duncan Smith has just promoted a far right winger to work in his whip's office.

She is Angela Watkinson, who was one of the MPs Duncan Smith forced to resign from the far right, pro repatriation for black people Monday Club.

Another ex-member of the club is Tory MP Andrew Hunter.

He was until very recently a patron of the *Right Now!* magazine that brags of its links to Jean-Marie Le Pen's Nazi National Front.

Hunter was an enthusiastic supporter of Iain Duncan Smith's campaign for the leadership of the Tories.

## THINGS THEY SAY

**"DESPITE the ramblings and spoutings of the overexcitable and scarcely rational children in Central Office, the nation is not possessed by an overwhelming urge to fill the shadow cabinet with 25 year old black lesbians and homosexual, asylum-seeking Muslims."**

■ LORD TEBBIT on why he believes the Tories are turning voters off

**"THIS WOULD risk a potentially serious adverse impact on significant interests of the US, including interests directly related to the struggle against international terrorism."**

■ US STATE DEPARTMENT ADVISER explains why he is trying to crush a human rights lawsuit brought by Indonesian villages against the Exxon Mobil oil company

**"WHEN WE go into a village and see a farmer with a beard, we see an Afghan farmer with a beard. When the Americans go into a village and see a farmer with a beard, they see Osama Bin Laden."**

■ FORMER MEMBER OF SPECIAL FORCES with a US coalition partner in Afghanistan

**"THERE ARE just so many performance targets all over the place that it is very hard for officers on the street to get a grip on what is expected of them next."**

■ KEVIN MORRIS, president of the police superintendents' union, on why police fail to meet 75 percent of crime targets

**"BYERS IS really going for it. He sees it as a springboard to coming back into government in a year or two's time."**

■ INSIDER on Byers's attempt to win chairmanship of the influential Friends of Israel group

DO YOU have a story for Inside the System?

Send it to Inside the System, Socialist Worker, PO Box 82, London E3 3LH. All readers who send in a story that is printed are put into a monthly raffle for a book. Last month's book was won by Richard Buckwell of Ashfield.

# How to spend your money

HERE IS some advice for readers worried about their stocks and shares.

If you had bought \$1,000 worth of Nortel stock a year ago, it would now be worth just \$49.

If you'd chosen to invest in Enron, the same \$1,000 would now be worth

only \$16.50.

Even worse, if you'd bought into WorldCom—again \$1,000—you'd be left with less than \$5.

However, if you'd spent \$1,000 on beer and returned each can for a 10 percent deposit, you'd have \$214.

Our advice is to forget stocks and shares, drink heavily and always recycle!

✉ Thanks to Richard Price in Gloucester.

## Bureau of fit-ups

THE FBI claims to be leading the fight against terrorism.

But a leading attorney denounced the FBI in a US courtroom recently. "It's clear that its intention is not about fighting terrorism, it's about suppressing dissent."

He was prosecuting a case brought by two environmental campaigners. Judi Bari and Darryl Cherney were taking

part in non-violent direct action. Their car was blown apart by a bomb. Bari's pelvis was shattered in ten places, but she and Cherney were arrested for possessing explosives.

The case was dropped, but only after the women had been smeared as terrorist bombers.

They sued the FBI for libel and, after ten years, the women were awarded \$4.4 million.



# COURT RULES AGAINST RIGHT WING COUP



Picture: JESS HURD www.reportdigital.co.uk

MARK SERWOTKA after last week's High Court victory

# Serwotka officially leader of PCS union

**THERE WAS jubilation outside the High Court in London last week at news of the legal victory of civil servants' union leader Mark Serwotka.**

He had finally won his battle to take up the position of general secretary of the PCS union.

A high court judge confirmed that his election in November 2000 was valid, and that the coup attempt by right wing former general secretary Barry Reamsbottom was illegal.

Mark Serwotka stood for election as a socialist. "I am now legally and democratically the general secretary of the PCS," he told a packed victory rally on Wednesday of last week.

Over 40,000 members elected Mark. A thousand members confirmed that decision at this year's PCS conference.

But Reamsbottom was determined to hang on to power.

When his misnamed "Moderate" supporters gained a majority on the PCS national executive in May this

year he launched a coup attempt, saying Mark's election was "unlawful".

This provoked uproar in the union among ordinary members which stopped Reamsbottom in his tracks.

It also no doubt played on the judge's mind last week.

"This is a knockout victory," said Mark Serwotka. "On every aspect of the case the judge found for us."

## Agreement

The judge ruled that Reamsbottom stopped being general secretary of the PCS on 31 May and that Mark Serwotka was validly elected.

He ruled that the national executive committee meeting which tried to push the coup through had "no effect".

He also found that the legal agreement Reamsbottom signed saying he would leave the PCS in June was valid.

He ruled that Reamsbottom was no longer a member of the union.

This severely restricts his ability to appeal against the decision.

Reamsbottom's final humiliation is a blow for Tony Blair.

He was one of the key trade union figures who pushed the idea of "partnership" with the bosses and sat on any signs of struggle.

Mark Serwotka supports the Socialist Alliance and opposes Bush and Blair's war drive.

Civil servants overwhelmingly backed Mark because he stands for a fight against low pay and privatisation.

Mark's victory comes after Derek Simpson beat Sir Ken Jackson, Tony Blair's biggest union ally, in the Amicus-AEEU general secretary election.

That followed the victory of several left wingers in union elections over the last two years.

According to the *Guardian* newspaper last week Mark Serwotka has been placed on Blair's "awkward squad" of union leaders who it isn't worth speaking to as they are "implacably hostile" to New Labour

## Prepare for battle

**'DEMOCRACY has been enshrined in our union—the members' choice is in place.**

My view is that the court that matters is the members, and that court ruled in our favour.

All the activity in our campaign has been based on the members. I and PCS president Janice Godrich have addressed countless meetings, the like of which we've never seen before in our union.

There were 350 people in London, 150 in Manchester, 120 in Nottingham and 30 in

Southend. Over 4,000 people signed a petition.

What brought people together is that this is our union and we won't allow a coup.

At the beginning of this campaign I said that this is a dark period for the union, but we would come through it and the union would be stronger. I was right.

This is fantastic for the PCS—democracy has been reborn.

One battle is over but a new one has begun. We shouldn't forget the reason I was elected—national pay bargaining

for civil servants, an end to low pay and a fight against privatisation.

These are my personal priorities and the priorities of the union members.

We still have a national executive in place that went along with the coup. We have to make sure it isn't allowed to thwart the decisions of the membership.

We have to consign these people who have tried to wreck the union to the dustbin of history.'

MARK SERWOTKA

## Pro-US forces behind plot

BARRY Reamsbottom's attempted coup was about more than who controls one union.

Reamsbottom is one of the vice-presidents of the Trade Union Committee for European and Transatlantic Understanding (TUCETU).

The TUCETU is an underground right wing faction.

Other vice-presidents are: Sir Ken Jackson, top-placed leader of Amicus-AEEU; Lord Bill Jordan, former leader of the AEEU; Eric Hammond, former leader of the EETPU electricians' union; and Doug McAvoy, current leader of the NUT teachers' union.

The TUCETU pushes pro-NATO and pro-US ideas inside the trade union movement.

Peter Robinson, the TUCETU director, sent out

a circular to the media, MPs, lords and TUCETU members during the elections for the PCS national executive and the Amicus general secretary elections.

"Sir Ken Jackson and Barry Reamsbottom together with their moderate colleagues are fighting elections to ensure moderate control and direction for each of their unions," Robinson said.

"Any support you can provide in your own area among AEEU and PCS members will be appreciated.

"In view of other recent trade union leadership and executive elections it is vital that we do all we can to reinforce the moderates' role in these two vitally important unions." With the circular he included an article from the *Economist* magazine which said that if the

Moderates win in the PCS, "the plan is to keep Barry Reamsbottom in the job until 2004 and sideline Mr Serwotka".

### 'This body pushes pro-NATO ideas in the unions'

Most of New Labour's defence team is linked to the TUCETU network.

Junior defence minister John Spellar is a former EETPU official and a member of the TUCETU.

He was also a key figure in Jackson's recent campaign. Peter Mandelson has written a pamphlet for the TUCETU.

The Foreign Office gives

over £100,000 a year to the TUCETU.

James Shea, NATO's director of information and press, has written two pamphlets for TUCETU.

TUCETU leaders took part in the Congress of Istanbul in 1998, organised by the American Enterprise Institute.

Topics included "Getting capitalism right" and "Broadening the Atlantic perspective: the politics of oil, water and pipelines".

Guest speakers included former Tory ministers Michael Portillo and Michael Howard, Bush adviser Richard Perle and Labour's Lord Gilbert, a vice-chair of the TUCETU and deputy defence minister.

Sponsoring companies included arms firms Lockheed Martin and ABW, and drugs multinational Pfizer.

Peter Robinson chaired a session at the Congress of Istanbul. He runs the NUT's education centre at Stoke Rochford.

He was a member of the European policy group of the Washington Strategic and International Studies in the mid-1980s.

*Socialist Worker* revealed in January this year that Mike Power, a senior TUC official, had been involved in a plot to stop left wingers being elected in the RMT rail union and the CWU postal workers' union.

Power met Barry Reamsbottom before the general secretary election. Who planned to "ensure moderate control" in the PCS?

What are the TUCETU's plans for future elections, such as those in the TGWU and GMB general unions next year?



CLOCKWISE FROM top left: Eric Hammond, Bill Jordan, Ken Jackson and Doug McAvoy are in the same outfit as Reamsbottom



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E-mail [letters@socialistworker.co.uk](mailto:letters@socialistworker.co.uk) or send to  
**letters**  
PO Box 82 London E3 3LH

## We have to stop killer companies

THE GLOBAL AIDS Fund has stalled. The G8 set this fund up to combat HIV, TB and malaria.

But G8 countries have only given \$1.3 billion to the fund. Kofi Annan, the UN general secretary, called for a minimum of 7 to 10 billion dollars a year for HIV alone.

The courts in South Africa have made another landmark decision—that expectant mothers should be given Nevirapine, an AIDS

drug, free of charge to stop mother to child transmission.

They should give all South Africans free AIDS drugs.

GlaxoSmithKline, the biggest drugs company in the world, spends millions stopping people getting generic AIDS drugs which are much cheaper.

Global capitalism is killing people, and it doesn't care because it is making profits.

"The money is there—just ask for it," as Nelson Mandela said at the closing ceremony of the World AIDS conference in Barcelona recently.

We also have to demonstrate. The next big HIV/AIDS conference will be in Glasgow in November. We need to organise a demonstration against the drugs companies.

□ GARY KELLY, Glasgow

## Socialists should oppose the euro

I WAS encouraged to read that members of the Socialist Alliance in England (*Socialist Worker*, 27 July) have succeeded in persuading their branch to campaign for a no vote in a future referendum on the single currency.

My branch of the Welsh Socialist Alliance in Swansea also recently backed a motion urging a no vote in the euro referendum.

Just as important perhaps was that the motion also called for the establishment of a socialist campaign against the euro.

This is vital, as every socialist would find it impossible to work with people like

Iain Duncan Smith and other Little Englanders.

I don't give a damn about saving the pound, but I do care about the huge cuts in public services that will come about if we join the euro.

Here in Wales we are already attempting to lay the foundations of a left-led no campaign, linking up with trade unionists, left wingers in the Labour Party, members of the Green Party and socialists in Plaid Cymru.

There are crucial issues at stake for working class people in the debate on the euro.

□ LEIGH RICHARDS, Swansea

## How will society be run differently?

I HAVE been reading *Socialist Worker* for two to three years, and enjoy reading information that is not available in the standard press. I do not argue that the capitalist system shouldn't be replaced with something better, but people in the SWP have failed to convince me that they can offer a real alternative.

Are there books outlining the replacement institutions: banks, parliament, stockmarkets, and an alternative to the market system?

How will funds be raised for projects like healthcare, transport and pensions?

Are there any writings on the psychology of such a system—what would provide incentives to continue and believe in that society?

There are also issues of crime and corruption.

Are you convinced that a change of society would eradicate these?

□ EDWARD MOLLOY, Glossop

# Ken Livingstone has caved in to the privateers



Picture: ANGELA STAPLEFORD

REFUGEES AND campaigners have united against Labour's attacks on asylum seekers

# Labour putting babies at risk

**THE INHUMANITY of New Labour's treatment of asylum seekers seems to have no limits.**

The principle of the United Nations and European Union conventions on the rights of the child and the rights of families is that, in any case affecting children, it is the interests of the child that must be the guide.

This is not the case, it appears, if that child is an asylum seeker.

The *Guardian* last week reported on the case of the mother who had to take the government to court in order to get milk tokens for her baby.

She is HIV positive and cannot risk breastfeeding. But she is an asylum seeker.

Milk tokens used to be given automatically to every mother from the time her pregnancy was confirmed until her baby reached one year old.

### Powdered

Now they are only given to mothers on income support, but not to asylum seekers even though they get only 70 percent of income support.

This government does not care if their babies suffer from malnutrition. Milk tokens can be ex-

changed for powdered baby milk or fresh milk.

Even breastfeeding mothers need them, because they need to drink extra to make enough milk for their babies.

The same issue of the *Guardian* had an article reporting on the increase in the detention of babies and children.

Pregnant mothers with small children seeking asylum are held in detention centres with razor wire and uniformed guards.

Asylum seekers are NOT criminals. We must campaign in their defence and spread the message "Refugees are welcome here".

□ SARAH COX, West London

## Bill will give firms a grip on democracy

I THINK people should be aware of one of the most undemocratic bills in recent history currently passing through parliament.

The City of London Bill intends to allow companies in the City of London to vote depending on their staff numbers for the City's government.

Residents' votes will be swamped, disenfranchising them. This will effectively mean that big

companies will run the City's local government and can buy votes.

As a campaigning paper I think it is extremely important that *Socialist Worker* brings this issue to the attention of your readers.

More information can be found on [www.poptel.org.uk/scgn/articles/0006/page5.htm](http://www.poptel.org.uk/scgn/articles/0006/page5.htm)

Keep up the good work.

□ MIKE COTGREAVE

## Open borders to refugees

THE "NO Borders" camp recently saw 2,500 pro-refugee activists take part.

The camp was held in Strasbourg to oppose the Schengen Information System—a computer system that establishes the building of Fortress Europe.

It is a massive database through which governments and security services can share information about people passing through "Schengen territory".

Some 90 percent of the information on the database relates to refugees.

The protest camp was a chance to promote the work being done in Britain, and to build international

support for the defence of people attempting to cross borders in Europe in order to find safe havens.

Actions against the deportation and detention of refugees are planned outside the Dover removal centre on Saturday 19 October.

The week 14 to 19 October will see demonstrations across Europe.

We aim to make the defence of the refugees who are trapped on the north coast of France the focus of this week.

□ THOMAS MCGOWAN, Kent Committee to Defend Asylum Seekers

KEN Livingstone's cowardly decision to drop his legal challenge to the government's privatisation of London Underground is a kick in the teeth for Londoners and tube workers.

Livingstone's election as mayor, against New Labour's Frank Dobson, was a massive rejection of Blair's policy of privatisation.

While it was always going to be difficult to win in the courts, Livingstone could have mounted a serious campaign with demonstrations and protests.

This could have been organised in conjunction with the tube workers' unions who are taking strike action over safety issues.

However, this would have meant tackling Labour head-on at a time when Livingstone seems to have tailored his strategy around his other goal of getting back into the Labour Party.

Fortunately, as our strike last month showed, we have the power to take on the privatisers and win.

Nonetheless, Livingstone has caved in at a time when the possibilities for building a movement that unites workers in the unions with campaigners for better transport and public services has never been better.

□ MAC MCKENNA, tube worker, South London

## I feel betrayed

ON HEARING that Ken Livingstone had abandoned his court battle over the London Underground PPP proposals I felt betrayed.

His opposition to PPP was the single most significant issue in his mayoral election success. He should have fought to the bitter end.

Abandoning the case, on the grounds that there was little chance of winning, seems highly suspicious and smacks of a deal with Blair.

□ HELEN MURPHY, South London

## Court and councils hit the poorest

A MEMBER of Crawley Pensioners Action Group, Ken Clement, was in court last week for non-payment of council tax.

His combined industrial and state pensions, he argues, had risen by some 5 percent, while the council tax had risen by 10 percent, which amounts to a cut in income.

The action group turned out in force to support him.

As we waited for him to be called in, a young woman came out of the court and joined the protest.

She was very angry at the way she had been treated—the court demanded payment of her council tax despite the fact that she was unable to work because of a broken leg.

Council tax and rent rises cancel out rises in pensions.

The surprising thing is that there is not already a national protest movement against this unfair tax which devastates anyone on low pay.

In the end Ken didn't appear in court.

They offered him until next August to pay off the backlog, rather than next April, when, of course, the next bill will arrive.

□ MURIEL HIRSCH, Crawley

**Socialist Worker**  
Editorial: 020 7538 0828  
Circulation and business: 020 7538 3305  
National office: 020 7538 5821  
Industrial Department: 020 7987 1919  
All correspondence to PO Box 82, London E3 3LH  
Published weekly except final week of December.  
Published and printed by Larkham Printers and Publishers Ltd (TU all departments)  
Registered as a newspaper with the Royal Mail  
[www.socialistworker.co.uk](http://www.socialistworker.co.uk)



# Bush determined to attack Iraq

# War looming but opposition grows

ANOTHER OPINION poll in Britain last week showed the shock and anger many people feel at George Bush's rush to start a war on Iraq.

Some 91 percent of *Daily Mirror* readers said in a phone poll that they were against the war. The paper has run several articles critical of an attack on Iraq and the war on Afghanistan.

"Mr Blair will next month face one of the biggest anti-war protests in Britain for years," said the *Mirror* last week.

"Protesters will mass in London on 28 September. A string of Stop the War Coalition events will be held over the next few weeks."

This follows a You.Gov poll that also showed how opposition to war on Iraq has increased over the last six months.

Some 57 percent in the poll agreed that "Blair behaves like Bush's poodle".

Bush has ratcheted up his war plans against Iraq several gears.

The press stories debate whether 50,000 or 250,000 US troops will go in and how soon, not if, a war will take place.

Bush is ignoring questions raised about the war that have come from unexpected sources—his own generals and strategists, rulers who are longstanding allies and the right wing media.

**He is gathering round him a small band of the bloodthirsty to press for war.**

That includes his Secretary of State, Colin Powell, who has been presented as a restraining influence on Bush.

Powell was wheeled out last week to dismiss Iraq's offer to talk to the United Nations' chief weapons inspector.

## The US hawks who sucked up to Saddam

THE US defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld is a key figure leading the charge for war against Iraq.

He says Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein is a monster who has to be stopped by US military might.

Yet this is the same man who had talks with Saddam Hussein in December 1983 when he was the Middle East envoy for then US president Ronald Reagan.

"It struck us as useful to have a relationship, given that we were interested in solving the Middle East problems," Rumsfeld told the *New York Times*.

Rumsfeld was the highest ranking US official to visit Iraq in six years.

After his meeting the *Washington Post*

•The US wants to force "a regime change in Bagdad and that policy will not be altered, whether inspectors go in or not"•

The warmongers claim that razing Iraq to the ground is acceptable because Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein is supposedly building up weapons of mass destruction.

There is no evidence for this, says Scott Ritter, former chief inspector of UNSCOM, the UN weapons inspection unit.

### Blank

But Bush doesn't want any weapons inspection to go ahead, as it may delay his war plans.

The UN chief weapons inspector, Hans Blix, gave a point blank no to an invitation to visit Baghdad for an official meeting last week.

Bush's under-secretary for arms control, John Bolton, admitted the US was not interested in the weapons inspection.

He confirmed that the US wants to force "a regime change in Bagdad

### BUSH AND his friends are plotting an invasion

and that policy will not be altered, whether inspectors go in or not."

Bush can also rely, as ever, on Tony Blair for support.

**The British navy's aircraft carrier *Ark Royal* is to set sail for the Mediterranean next month packed out with Harrier jets, Merlin helicopters and 1,300 crew on board.**

A destroyer is sailing alongside the warship which is set to carry out exercises with the US military.

The two ships could easily sail into the Gulf to join any US action, despite Blair's claims that he has not made any decision to support Bush's war plans.

Those preparations include the fleet of US military trucks being ordered in for rapid servicing, a freight train loaded with

trucks painted for desert service being moved through Chicago last week, and enquiries about making tankers available to transport fuel that would be required in any war.

The US has also dug out its fighting vehicles in Kuwait that were moth-balled at the end of the Gulf War 11 years ago.

Bush is isolated in his drive for war, but he is determined to push ahead.

**We can build on the growing opposition to make it harder for Blair to be Bush's docile ally.**

Church leaders, old military figures and leading trade unionists are all making public statements against the war.

Every single show of opposition on the streets or in anti-war meetings puts more pressure on Blair and his hawks.

That makes it all the more urgent to build up opposition to the war through protests, meetings, and mobilising widely for the demonstration on 28 September.

## Governments' war is breaking the law

THE US and Britain are trying to present themselves as the champions of freedom and democracy as they threaten war on Iraq.

But both countries are locking people up indefinitely without charge and denying them any right to protest.

A US federal judge ruled last week that the government could stop the men detained in Guantanamo Bay in Cuba from having a trial in the US.

Lawyers for two British men and one Australian had tried to ensure the men could at least have access to the US judicial system.

**But the men will face military courts.**

The New Labour government's laws against "terrorism", rushed through parliament last year, were exposed by a court last week.

Some 11 people have been detained without trial or any evidence against them under the laws.

A court ruled last week that the government's Anti-Terror, Crime and Security Act was "not only discriminatory and so unlawful, but also it is disproportionate".

### Tribunal

The special tribunal said Blunkett's internment laws were unfair because they solely targeted foreign nationals.

One of those imprisoned is Mahmoud Abu Rideh, a 30 year old Palestinian, who is now

seriously ill in Broadmoor high security prison.

He is confined to a wheelchair, suffering from severe mental illness and now at risk of dying after a three-month hunger strike against his confinement.

New Labour has ignored Amnesty International's pleas to free him and the other men.

The government is insisting on keeping them locked up while they appeal against the ruling.



REFUGEES

# Home Office report trashes Labour's lies

THE KEY myths about refugees in Britain have been trashed in a recent report that was commissioned by the Home Office.

Vaughan Robinson and Jeremy Segrott from the University of Wales produced the report that investigates why asylum seekers end up in Britain.

The report takes on the arguments poured out by press and politicians that refugees flock to Britain because it is a "soft touch".

The authors quote a typical comment from the *Daily Mail*: "We resent the scroungers, beggars and crooks who are prepared to cross every country in Europe to reach our generous benefits system."

They interviewed 65 asylum seekers ranging from teenagers to over 50 year olds living in Britain between October 2000 and February 2001.

*The refugees came from various countries, including a large number from Sri Lanka and Somalia.*

They were not driven by lust for "generous benefits".

"Many of those in the sample were fleeing persecution, violence or threats of violence."

"They were therefore more concerned about escaping from their country of origin than they were about which country they would eventually seek refuge in," the researchers conclude.

Refugees do not inevitably head for Britain.

Home Office statistics published last week show that Britain ranks tenth among European countries in terms of asylum seeker applications per head of population.

Robinson and Segrott's research shows that a refugee's final destination is determined by a number of factors.

Some in their study needed to leave the country quickly, so they did not have time to plan where they would end up. Those who were forced to use an agent to prepare their escape could be at the mercy of that agent.

## Honey

Some did not even know they were heading for Britain until they arrived here.

The refugees also explained that agents charged more for some journeys.

One Sri Lankan said, "If I came to Britain I'd spend nearly £5,000. Australia is £7,000 and America is £8,000."

Some of the refugees said they had wanted to come to Britain. "The UK was certainly not viewed as a land of milk and honey," says the report.

A refugee from Iran explained, "I wanted to go to France or Sweden but they say England is better because the spoken language is English. English is the most common language in the world so I said OK."

These refugees had a vague image of Britain—rather than a detailed knowledge that they could end up living off vouchers worth £37.77 a week or be dumped in a detention centre.

The image they had is the same one Tony Blair likes to present around the globe. "I knew it is a democracy. You can think what you want. It's a free country," said an Iranian asylum seeker.

The refugees expected to

by HELEN SHOOTER

work to support themselves. Many had the skills typical of refugees arriving in Britain including teaching, engineering and healthcare.

A woman from Iran said, "I didn't know about benefit. I didn't know about social security."

"I said, 'OK, my life couldn't get worse.' I just thought I'll go anywhere and scrub the floor just to get out of Iran."

Some refugees were influenced by the legacy of British imperialism in their countries. They felt that history would mean the British government would not turn them away.

"We wear white wedding dresses. That's not in our religion, and it's not really in our Somali traditional culture, but we had that from the British," said one refugee from Somalia.

## Peace

The researchers' conclusion is a direct challenge to New Labour's witch-hunting of refugees:

"Relatively little of a positive nature has yet been said about asylum seeking, which paradoxically continues to be cast by government and the media as a problem, a burden and a cost."

"The findings that asylum seekers are ordinary people driven by ordinary desires such as wanting to live in peace in a democracy that allows free speech suggest the need for a more benign and better informed debate about this type of migration."

This study on refugees was not splashed all over the newspapers last week.

Yet a report from the right wing Migration Watch group was discussed at length in the media.

The group claimed two million immigrants were pouring into Britain over the next decade.

*These fantasy figures included wild guesses of how many refugees enter Britain illegally.*

Migration Watch is run by Sir Andrew Green, a retired diplomat, who repeats the dangerous right wing line that "immigration is out of control".

His sidekick is Dr David Coleman, whose letters in the *Times* have supported racist beliefs that immigration from Commonwealth countries should be tightly controlled.

Their claim to want a "debate on immigration" is code for pushing racist views and scaremongering stories about asylum which are seized on by press and politicians.

For the true picture of refugees in Britain, get hold of Robinson and Segrott's research.

■ "Understanding the Decision Making of Asylum Seekers" is available from [www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs2/hors243.pdf](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs2/hors243.pdf)

## Lewisham 13 August 1977

# The day we beat the Nazis

by HAZEL CROFT

THE BATTLE of Lewisham, which took place 25 years ago this month, was a decisive turning point in the fight against the Nazis in Britain.

On 13 August 1977 over 10,000 people—black and white, old and young, women and men—joined together to physically confront the Nazis and stop them from marching.

The battle showed how the Nazis could be driven off the streets and it marked the beginning of a mass campaign to smash the Nazis.

The Nazi National Front (NF) wanted to march through the racially mixed area of Lewisham in south London to demonstrate their power.

In the 1970s the NF had grown from a tiny fascist organisation to threaten to overtake the Liberals as the third party in British politics.

The Nazis were able to feed off people's disillusionment with the then Labour government. Workers' wages had been slashed by 7 percent and unemployment had reached what was then a record 1.6 million.

In 1976 in a by-election in West Bromwich the NF candidate Martin Webster had got 16.2 percent of the vote.

In May 1977 the Nazis had gained 119,000 votes in the elections to the Greater London Council—more than the Liberals. In some areas the NF gained over a fifth of the vote.

The Nazis were given confidence by a vicious racist campaign by politicians and the media during 1976, against 250 Asians who had been kicked out of Malawi in Africa.

This witch-hunt encouraged the Nazis. At least four Asians were murdered in east London by white gangs in the following two years.

The Nazis wanted to harden up their electoral support and whip up a climate of fear against black and Asian people.

In the weeks leading up to 13 August the Nazis attacked a series of black and left wing meetings.

They threw deadly weedkiller

into a woman's face as she attended a street meeting of the black defence group the Lewisham 21 Defence Committee.

The group was set up after 21 black youths were arrested in what the police called Operation Police Nigger Hunt.

On 13 August there were two counter-demonstrations against the NF march.

The first was called by the Lewisham Campaign Against Racism.

This included various dignitaries, trade union officials and the

local bishop.

The demonstration assembled two hours before the Nazis were due to meet, and on the other side of Lewisham.

The organisers agreed with police instructions to disband the march well away from the Nazis' meeting point. Leaders of the Communist Party, then a much bigger force, also ordered their members to keep away from the Nazis' assembly point.

This would have left the Nazis free to march and to gain even more confidence for future attacks.

Socialist Workers Party members, along with the Lewisham 21 Defence Committee, argued that people should block the NF march.

This strategy drew on the battles against the fascists in the 1930s that had culminated in the Battle of Cable Street. Then demonstrators physically prevented the Nazis from marching.

The second demonstration assembled at Clifton Rise, where the Nazis were due to meet.

Some 5,000 people from outside the area united with a similar number of local people to confront the Nazis.

Many of those on the first march came to join the confrontation.

There were so many people blocking the streets that the NF marchers could not assemble in Clifton Rise.

Instead they were forced into a miserable backstreet, protected by thousands of police.

The counter-demo was a wonderful example of black and white unity. Socialist writer Dave Widgery later described the scene: "As the police prepared their charge, an Afro-Caribbean woman who had been watching from the top floor of her home hoisted her hi-fi speaker onto her windowsill."

"It was playing Bob Marley's 'Get Up, Stand Up'. Almost directly opposite her a Cypriot woman replied with a clenched-fist salute from the first floor of her boarded-up kebab and chip shop."

"Two minutes later an officer with a megaphone read an order to disperse. No one did."

The police defended the Nazis. They were allowed through police cordons if they showed their NF membership cards.

By contrast the police tested new methods of crowd control by indiscriminately attacking and breaking up lines of anti-Nazi protesters.

But instead of running away, anti-Nazi demonstrators fought back and threw sticks and smoke-bombs over the police and into the Nazi marchers. Protesters continually blocked the Nazis as they tried to march through the backstreets.

On at least two occasions protesters broke through police lines and seized and burned Nazi banners.

The Nazis were routed. After crawling round the backstreets the NF eventually had to disperse with less than half their route completed.

When this news reached the anti-Nazi protesters a huge cry of "We stopped the Front" rang out.



## NAZI LEADERS WERE FOILED

THE NAZI Front got the hammering of their lives on Saturday. Black people and trade unionists, old and young, 14 year olds and veterans of Cable Street, Rastafarians and Millwall supporters, Labour Party members and revolutionary socialists—all joined in against the Nazis.

The leaders of the Nazis want to build a mass movement based on widespread racial prejudice so as to take command of the streets.

They believe they would then be able to attack, burn out and murder black people and trade unionists at will.

They have been foiled. SOCIALIST WORKER, 20 August 1977

## INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM★95

out



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# How a movement grew to stop NF

THE REACTION of the press and mainstream politicians to the magnificent anti-Nazi demonstration, however, was a disgrace.

They did not condemn the Nazis or heavy policing, but blamed all the violence on the anti-fascists.

Labour Party leaders made disgusting statements.

Michael Foot, then deputy leader of the Labour Party, said, "You don't stop the Nazis by throwing bottles or bashing the police. The most ineffective way of fighting the fascists is to behave like them."

Bob Chamberlain, the West Midlands organiser for the Labour Party, called the SWP "red fascists".

But despite the hostile barrage from politicians and press, the Battle of Lewisham launched the start of a mass campaign to smash the NF.

It showed ordinary people that with united action the Nazis could

be beaten back.

Dave Widgery described the impact:

"The black community, who had successfully defended their patch, had had a glimpse of a white anti-racist feeling which was much bigger and more militant than the liberal community-relations tea parties might suggest."

"Every little racist was made smaller. Many people who had reservations about direct action found themselves regretting they had not been there too."

## Threat

The Anti Nazi League (ANL) was set up shortly after Lewisham.

The ANL combined physically confronting the Nazis wherever they raised their head, with powerful propaganda exposing the NF as the heirs of Adolf Hitler.

It produced hundreds of thousands of badges and leaflets against the Nazis.

A declaration against the NF was signed by hundreds of well known people—from musicians to MPs, trade union leaders to footballers.

*There was a flourishing of local anti-Nazi groups in workplaces, colleges and schools around Britain.*

The same young people targeted by the Nazis as potential supporters were drawn into a movement that fought the fascists.

In schools across Britain it became popular to wear anti-Nazi badges.

The ANL, along with bands and musicians in Rock Against Racism,

also organised three hugely successful carnivals with the top punk and new wave bands of the day.

The first carnival was in April 1978.

Some 80,000 people marched from central London through the East End, to join thousands more at a carnival in Victoria Park.

*The carnival helped transform the atmosphere in the Nazis' stronghold area of east London and throughout the rest of Britain.*

By the general election in 1979 the Nazis' vote had fallen to just 1.3 percent.

And in the 1981 Greater London Council elections, the Nazis got just 2.1 percent of the vote compared to 5.7 percent in 1977.

The NF's national organiser, Martin Webster, admitted in 1981, "The sheer presence of the ANL had made it impossible to get NF members on the streets, had dashed recruitment and cut away at their vote."

Today we once again face the threat of the Nazis, as people feel totally let down by a Labour government that seems to offer them nothing.

The Nazi BNP got three councillors elected in Burnley in May and hopes to grow by feeding off people's disillusion.

The experience of the 1970s shows that with a mass campaign that exposes and confronts the Nazis we can kick them back to the sewers they came from.

■ For more information on the Anti Nazi League phone 020 7924 0333 or go to [www.anl.org.uk](http://www.anl.org.uk)

10,000 PEOPLE—BLACK AND WHITE, WORKERS AND STUDENTS—UNITED...





# IT'S NOT JUST McDONALD'S, EXPLAINS CHARLIE KIMBER



EVERY DAY 25,000 people die directly from starvation. Many thousands more die from diseases because their bodies are weakened by malnutrition.

The multinationals and bankers wreck the economies of countries in Africa and Asia where those people starve. But there are firms which are also directly responsible for who lives and who dies, who eats and who wastes away.

As in every sphere, a handful of corporations dominate the world food market.

What should be a basic human right has been turned into a source of fabulous profit for a few.

The blizzard of brand names hides the truth about who controls food.

Few people know that one of the world's biggest food firms is a tobacco company (Philip Morris) that makes vast profits from spreading its killer drug across the globe.

Just two companies (Cargill and Archer Daniels Midland) control three quarters of the world's grain trade. Four huge multinational corporations (Philip Morris, Nestlé, Procter & Gamble, and Sara Lee) control 70 percent of the world's coffee market.

Only three companies (Cargill, ADM and Philip Morris) account for over 80 percent of the world cocoa trade.

Five agribusinesses (Astra-Zeneca, DuPont, Monsanto, Novartis and Aventis) account for nearly two thirds of the global pesticide market, almost one quarter of the global seed market and virtually all of the genetically modified seed.

These are the top ten firms that preside over a world where 850 million are malnourished and others are obese through eating unhealthy food.

**CARGILL and ARCHER DANIELS MIDLAND (ADM)** control the world's grain trade and much more.

They show exactly how food multinationals operate. They, not our governments, decide the price of staple foods.

It is these corporations that decide who will live and who will starve.

If you log on to the website [www.e-adm.com](http://www.e-adm.com) you can see the prices of a vast



THIS MAN is walking on a grain mountain

# Corporations that control world's food

array of agricultural products which are being traded—including pork bellies, soya beans, rough rice, cocoa, cotton, oats, wheat and others.

There are fortunes to be made from starvation.

The price of corn (maize) soared by nearly 20 percent between March and July this year. That global price movement is more sharp in the famine belt of Southern Africa where desperate people will pay an even higher price.

As the "corn futures index" ticks higher, grain traders pocket a big profit. In the barren fields of Malawi or Zimbabwe people who have never heard of Cargill or ADM watch their children's lives ebb away. There is food available, but they can't afford it.

In 1996 drought and disease hit the US wheat crop hard. Cargill (and Continental Grain, which Cargill has since bought) bought wheat at \$60 to \$100 a tonne from India and sold it at \$230 to \$240 a tonne on the international market.

The export created shortages then had India and several million tonnes within had to be reimported by the Indian government at the world market price.

Both Cargill and ADM are linked to the US state. They get huge subsidies and can rely on the US military to protect their interests across the globe.

At the recent World Food Summit in Rome the US delegation stood alone among 182 nations in opposing the statement that food was a right.

Bush's representatives pressured other countries to back an even greater role for the private sector, trade liberalisation and obedience to the World Trade Organisation.

In return for that sort of support Western governments can rely on the big firms using food as a political weapon. Grain shipments to Sudan were suspended

during the Gulf War in 1991 because that country's government had failed to declare itself against Iraq.

Cargill has had its man in the White House in every generation. In the 1970s William Pearce left Cargill and became President Nixon's deputy special representative for trade negotiations. He helped draft key documents about farming, food and international trade. He then rejoined Cargill.

In the 1980s Daniel Amstutz moved from being in charge of feed grains for Cargill to become under-secretary of agriculture for international affairs.

Former Cargill chairman Ernest Micek was on Bill Clinton's export council. He was one of three top businessmen who accompanied Clinton on his tour of Africa.

Cargill and ADM talk publicly about "enterprise".

But ADM chief executive Dwayne Andreas once boasted, "There isn't one grain of anything that is sold in the free market. Not one! The only place you see a free market is in the speeches of politicians."

Andreas's right hand man, James Randall, added, "We have a saying in our company: 'Our competitors are our friends, our customers are the enemy'."

In 1996 ADM executives admitted they met with executives from other grain dealers to fix prices, eliminate competition and allocate sales between firms.

They knew this was illegal, so publicly they said the meetings were about issues such as environmental protection.

Cargill's commodity trading arm, Tradax International, is based in Panama, a tax haven. Cargill is a "private company" (not listed on the stock exchange). It therefore does not have to declare any financial information. Its profits are believed to be around \$3 billion a year.

ADM reported last month that its sales during the last year were worth over

\$23 billion and annual profit had broken through the \$1 billion barrier.

**NESTLÉ** (expected profit for this year \$5 billion) is perhaps the world's largest food company. It is dominant in chocolate and coffee markets. Its brands include Kit Kat, Nescafé, Buitoni, Crosse & Blackwell, Shreddies, Carnation, Vittel, Perrier, Cheerios and Polo.

The company has been a target for protests over its aggressive marketing of powdered baby milk in parts of the world where there is no safe water.

Nestlé was one of several multinational chocolate producers that said recently it was "shocked" by evidence of child slavery on cocoa plantations in West Africa.

The giant firms' stranglehold on raw material prices intensifies the pressures that lead to child slavery.

Cocoa prices dropped to a 30-year low last year so unpaid labour is tempting to local producers.

**PHILIP MORRIS** (expected profit \$10 billion), the tobacco giant, owns General Foods and Kraft.

Kraft is the largest US food producer with brands such as Maxwell House coffee, Toblerone chocolate, Philadelphia cheese, Cracker Barrel cheese, Lowenbrau, Miller beers, Jell-O, Kool-Aid and hundreds of others.

Philip Morris uses the power it gains from its food business to pressure governments into holding back on anti-tobacco laws.

Around four million people die every year from tobacco-related illnesses. In 30 years time that figure is expected to rise to ten million.

**UNILEVER** (expected profit \$4 billion) sells food and other products in 150



countries under brand names such as Brooke Bond, Calvin Klein fragrances, Bestfoods, Birds Eye, Persil, Omo, Knorr, Hellmann's, Dove, Ben & Jerry's, Lipton, Slim Fast and Levers.

It is the world's largest tea firm and fights to keep raw material prices low. In the mid-1980s, when tea prices began to edge up, Unilever and other big firms organised a temporary boycott of Indian tea to force prices down again.

Unilever's history is entangled with the power of imperialism. Protected by the British state, it was the dominant company in West Africa until 1950.

The firm won the praise of Adolf Hitler who noted its "incredible efficiency" at exploiting colonies.

Chairman Niall Fitzgerald is one of the leading global supporters of privatisation and the market.

Unilever is the world's biggest advertiser, spending around £3 billion a year.

**PEPSICO** (expected profit \$3.5 billion) is most famous for its cola but also owns KFC. It has subsidiaries in repressive regimes such as Burma.

**MARS INCORPORATED** (expected profit \$2 billion) brands include Snickers, Twix, M&Ms and Uncle Ben. It is another multinational that benefits from collapsing commodity prices. Its precise profits are unknown because, like Cargill, it is a private company.

**DIAGEO** (expected profit \$1.8 billion) is the result of a merger between Grand Metropolitan and Guinness. Most of its profit comes from alcohol—Johnnie Walker, Guinness, J&B, Baileys, Smirnoff and many others.

**COCA-COLA** (expected profit \$3.5 billion) is the best known product name in the world. It stands accused of working with death squads in Colombia to eliminate union organisation at its plants.

**CONAGRA FOODS** (expected profit \$2 billion) has become a major force by sweeping up competitors in the meat industry. Its operations now centre on frozen foods such as Butterball turkeys, packaged foods, and agricultural products like fertilisers, seeds and chemicals.



## in my view

# Mourn in the USA

UP UNTIL now the events of 11 September 2001 have produced little in the world of popular music other than jingoistic flag-waving by certain second and third rate US musicians.

The current number one in the US album charts, for example, is a piece of gung-ho filth called *Unleashed* performed by a redneck country singer called Toby Keith.

Keith has a range of songs variously celebrating bombing Afghanistan, kicking ass, and glorying in the Red, White and Blue.

There was therefore much anticipation awaiting the new Bruce Springsteen album, *The Rising*.

Much of the eager anticipation, certainly as far as his fans were concerned, came from the fact that this was the first studio set Springsteen has recorded with the E Street Band since the *Born in the USA* album.

Secondly, and for the audience beyond Springsteen's existing fans even more importantly, the album was said to be Springsteen's response to 11 September.

**Springsteen, unusually for a rock star, has grown more political and more left wing as he has grown older.**

The easy solutions of motorbikes, fast cars, the open road, rock & roll and the girl you love in his early songs gave way to deeper questioning and more overtly political lyrics.

He went on to condemn the Republicans and the Democrats as "two parties for the rich". He then wrote and performed the fantastic "American Skin (41 Shots)".

The song was about the killing of an unarmed, and completely innocent, young black man by New York cops, whose representatives were outraged at Springsteen's response.

### Different response

Therefore many will no doubt have been hoping for this album to express horror at the war hawkery of Bush, Rumsfeld et al.

If so, then Springsteen disappoints. He makes little or no overt generalised political comment on the events.

Instead he attempts to look at the human tragedy. He tries to sing through the voice of the loved ones left behind—their pain, their loss and their incomprehension.

He sings of their desire for "an eye for an eye" on the track "Empty Sky".

**But these are not songs of revenge or jingoistic glory—rather they are sad songs pleading for a different world.**

So the track "Let's Be Friends (Skin to Skin)" is both a plea to an ex-lover and a cry for a different response to the hawks:

*I know we're different you and me,  
Got a different way of walkin',  
The time has come to let the past be history,  
Yeah, if we could just start talkin'.*

This is spelt out even more clearly in the song "World Apart", about a love affair between an American and a Muslim from the Middle East.

"May the living let us in before the dead tear us apart", cries one lover to the other.

The song is performed to a distinctly Arab musical sound, with additional backing and vocals by Asif Ali Khan and Arab musicians. Clearly Springsteen is making a point here.

Nevertheless, such points are subtle and understated, and it will disappoint many that he is not more overt.

He raged against the misuse of "Born in the USA" by the US right, and there is certainly no anthem here for them to steal, but neither will there be much to stoke their anger.

This is a fine album, subtle and tender of tone, that most Springsteen fans will enjoy, but an anti-war anthem it is not.

by PAT STACK

## media

# Blair wants TV run by Murdoch

**JUST HOW far will Tony Blair go in his pursuit of media tycoon Rupert Murdoch?**

Blair is set to rip up the findings of a parliamentary committee that discussed his government's draft Communications Bill.

The committee advised New Labour to scrap its plans to loosen controls on British TV that would allow Rupert Murdoch's Fox TV to gobble up Channel 5.

But, faced with a choice between Murdoch and a group of democratically elected politicians, Blair knows which side he is on.

Blair wants to ignore the whole process he set up over the draft Communications Bill because it hasn't come up with the answer he wanted.

Earlier this year the government announced it was preparing to scrap rules preventing US companies buying into British TV.

**Australian-born Murdoch is a US citizen for tax avoidance purposes.**

The new legislation also proposed that newspaper owners should be allowed to buy British TV stations.

Murdoch already controls over 35 percent of the newspaper market in Britain through his News International company, which produces the *Times*, *Sunday Times*, *Sun* and *News of the World*.

New Labour's legislation was so controversial that the government had to set up a joint parliamentary committee to scrutinise the plans.

The draft Communications Bill was to be handed over to "people power". An online discussion forum was set up, allowing both experts and members of the public to have their say.

**But the parliamentary committee did not back Blair's open door policy for Murdoch.**

It said it couldn't see the benefits of opening up British TV stations to US companies while the US continues its blanket ban on foreign companies owning US TV or radio stations.

Murdoch is already looking to extend his reach in Britain by making a bid with his BSkyB satellite company and the BBC to buy up the remnants of ITV Digital.

## radio

# When British judges sent angry to jail

A NEW radio play this week marks the thirtieth anniversary of the trial of the Angry Brigade.

The Angry Brigade were a group of young British men and women who launched a campaign of bombing against the government in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

They were inspired by the huge waves of international protests against war in Vietnam, repression in Ireland and attacks on workers' rights in Britain.

Their response was to target symbols of the system like the Post Office Tower and a leading Tory minister.

The play documents the trial, and the way that the state authorities bent all their will to ensure Anna Mendelson, Hilary Creek, John Barker and James Greenfield were sent down for ten years.

It shows how all four of them were politically committed to a different kind of world.

But it also shows that they looked to individual action, rather than mass confrontation and the struggles that broke out in the 1970s.

**The Trial of the Angry Brigade will be broadcast this Friday, 9 August, at 9pm on Radio 4.**

MURDOCH AIMS to expand his empire

## book

# African socialists write on struggle

THE NEWS of famine across much of southern Africa has underlined the suffering of that continent—a suffering which is the result of slavery, colonialism and capitalism.

But there is another side of African experience—the fightback against capitalism and imperialism.

A new book, *Class Struggle and Resistance in Africa*,

excitingly sets out the resistance which has already occurred, and the further potential for left wing struggle.

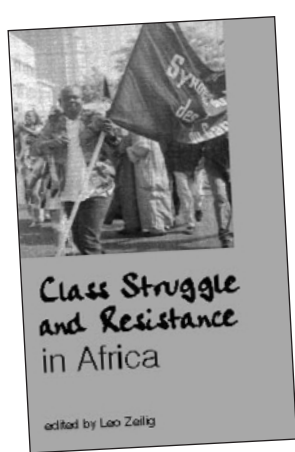
It gives an insight into the arguments inside the left about how to take those battles further.

One of the most important questions is how socialists can participate in struggles against repression or World Bank and IMF dictates without subordinating working class interests to those of the middle class and business.

The book gives space to African socialists to lay out their experiences, their ideas and their record of struggle.

There are interviews with activists from Zimbabwe, Zambia, Egypt, Zambia, Nigeria and South Africa.

Read this for inspiration, for the sense that we are part of a world movement, and for the introduction it gives to the



Picture: PA PHOTOS





INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

The workers create all the wealth under capitalism. A new society can only be constructed when they collectively seize control of that wealth and plan its production and distribution.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say. It has to be overthrown.

THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class.

They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers’ state based upon councils of workers’ delegates and a workers’ militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle.

We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls. We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence.

We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country. In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism.

In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties.

We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women.

We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbians and gays.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party. Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests.

We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

We urge all those who agree with our policies to join with us in the struggle to build the revolutionary party.

# Marxist forums

The Socialist Workers Party is hosting Marxist forums across England and Wales. Why not come along and join in the discussion?



ACTON

What would socialism be like?

Tue 13 Aug, 7.30pm, West London Trade Union Club, Acton High St.

BIRKENHEAD

WorldCom and Enron: crony capitalism or crisis of the system?

Thu 22 Aug, 7.30pm, Oxton Green Community Centre, Christchurch Rd.

BRADFORD

Globalisation: if big business can cross borders, why can't people?

Sat 10 Aug, 2.30pm, Bradford Library, Princes Way.

BRENT

Crisis in Zimbabwe

Sun 11 Aug, 3.30pm, Willesden Library Centre, Willesden High Rd.

BRIGHTON

Gay liberation and anti-capitalism

Sun 18 Aug, 7pm, Phoenix Community Centre, Phoenix Place (next to Free Butt). *With Peter Morgan.*

BRIXTON

WorldCom and Enron: crony capitalism or crisis of the system?

Tue 13 Aug, 7.30pm, Max's Cafe, Station Rd.

BROMLEY

Will capitalism cost us the earth?

Sun 11 Aug, 2pm, Balcony, Cafe Giardino, Glades Shopping Centre (first floor).

BURNLEY

Argentina in revolt: video showing

Tue 13 Aug, 7.30pm, Shalamar, Church St.

CALEDONIAN ROAD

How capitalism underdeveloped Africa

Thu 15 Aug, 7.30pm, Shillibeers Restaurant, North Rd. *With Tokumbo Oke.*

CAMBRIDGE

Russia 1917: coup or workers' revolution?

Thu 15 Aug, 7.30pm, Jaffe Net Cafe, Mill Rd. *With Megan Trudell.*

CAMDEN

Che Guevara: who was he?

Mon 19 Aug, 7.30pm, Cafe Moretti, Camden High St (Camden Town ☺). *With Andy Brown.*

CARDIFF

Why do people resort to terrorism?

Tue 13 Aug, 7.30pm, Atlantic Coffee House, City Rd.

CHESTERFIELD

As the stockmarkets crash: is capitalism in crisis?

Thu 8 Aug, 7.30pm, Assembly Halls, Market Square. *With Rob Hoveman.*

CRAWLEY

New Labour and the unions: is the honeymoon over?

Wed 14 Aug, 7.30pm, Three Bridges Community Centre, Gales Place.

EALING

Palestine: can it ever be free? Eyewitness report from Palestine

Thu 8 Aug, 7.30pm, Friends Meeting House, Woodville Rd. *With Rob Ferguson.*

EAST HAM

Islam and fundamentalism

Thu 15 Aug, 6.30pm, St Bartholomew's Church, Bath Rd.

ENFIELD

Che Guevara: more than a revolutionary icon?

Thu 22 Aug, 7.30pm, Edmonton Community Centre, Plevna St.

GLOUCESTER

What would a socialist society look like?

Thu 15 Aug, 5.30pm, Warehouse, Parliament St.

HACKNEY SHOREDITCH

Are women liberated now?

Thu 8 Aug, 8pm, Barley Mow, Curtain Rd. *With Judy Cox.*

HACKNEY WICK

Israel and Palestine: can Arabs and Jews live in peace?

Sun 11 Aug, 4pm, Quality Cafe, Morning Lane (nr Well St Market).

HARRINGAY GREEN LANES

Can workers run society?

Wed 21 Aug, 7.30pm, Cafe Delices du Jour, 533 Green Lanes (cnr of Hewitt Rd).

ILFORD

Imperialism: is it the armed wing of globalisation?

Tue 20 Aug, 7.30pm, Icon Bar and Restaurant, 262 Ilford High Rd.

IPSWICH

New Labour and the unions: is the honeymoon over?

Mon 12 Aug, 8pm, Cafe Marx, CAB, Tower St.

LADBROKE GROVE

Malcolm X and the fight for black liberation

Tue 13 Aug, 7.30pm, Green Room, Paddington Arts Centre, Westfield Rd (Westbourne Park ☺).

LEEDS CHAPELTOWN

Punk and the politics of protest

Thu 8 Aug, 7.30pm, HQ, Newtown Rd.

LEICESTER

Women's liberation and globalisation

Mon 19 Aug, 7.30pm, Mozart Cafe, London Rd.

LIVERPOOL CENTRAL

WorldCom and Enron: crony capitalism or crisis of the system?

Tue 13 Aug, 7.15pm, Casa, Hope St.

LOWESTOFT

Are Labour the new Tories? How much has Blair changed the Labour Party?

Thu 15 Aug, 8pm, Havelock, Love Rd.

LUTON BURY PARK

Is America all powerful?

Thu 8 Aug, 7.30pm, LHTC (above Jillani Fashion) 179-185 Dunstable Rd.

LUTON CENTRAL

Revolution: is it possible?

Mon 19 Aug, 7.30pm, CoMotion Cafe Bar, (next to Thistle Hotel, nr Arndale). *With Megan Trudell.*

MANCHESTER CENTRAL

What gives workers confidence?

Sat 10 Aug, 3pm, Unitarian Chapel, Cross St.

MARGATE

Can Palestine be free?

Thu 15 Aug, 7.30pm, Pharmacy Community Gallery, Market Square.

NEW CROSS

The Battle of Lewisham: video showing

Tue 13 Aug, 7pm, Moonbow Jakes Cafe Bar, (between New Cross Gate and New Cross ☹).

NEWCASTLE CENTRAL

Malcolm X and the fight for black liberation

Tue 20 Aug, 7.30pm, Side Cafe, Quay Side.

NORTHAMPTON

Revolution: is it possible?

Thu 8 Aug, 7.30pm, Cafe Msaada, Kettering Rd (cnr of Clare St). *With Peter Morgan.*

NOTTINGHAM HOCKLEY

Why can big business roam the world and people can't?

Tue 13 August, 7pm, Vans Bar, Broad St.

NOTTINGHAM HYSON GREEN

Can Palestine be free?

Tue 13 Aug, 7.30pm, Art Exchange, Gregory Blvd.

NOTTINGHAM TRENT BRIDGE

The 1926 General Strike

Fri 16 Aug, 12.30pm. Ferret and Firkin, London Rd (opp County Hall).

OXFORD

New Labour and the unions: is the honeymoon over?

Thu 8 Aug, 7.30pm, Mitre Hotel, 18 High St.

PRESTON

Is the US all powerful?

Mon 12 Aug, 7.30pm, Unity Community Centre, Shephard St.

READING

Women's liberation: why are women still being oppressed?

Sat 17 Aug, 4pm, Reading International Solidarity Centre, London St.

ROCHESTER

Unions and the new left: how should we organise?

Thu 15 Aug, 7.30pm, Eon Internet Cafe, Rochester High St (opp Oxfam).

SOUTHAMPTON

What is class?

Mon 12 Aug, 7.30pm, Freedom Cafe, High St.

ST ALBANS

Manufacturing dissent: the politics of Noam Chomsky

Mon 19 Aug, 7.30pm, Trinity Church, Victoria St. *With Shaun Doherty.*

SHEFFIELD CENTRAL

Blair and the unions: is the honeymoon over?

Sat 10 Aug, 4pm, Coffee Revolution, Church St.

WALTHAMSTOW

Are we facing a summer of discontent?

Thu 8 Aug, 7.30pm, Rio Cafe, 85 High St.

WHITSTABLE

Art, alienation and the politics of the beat generation

Sun 11 Aug, 3pm, Marx and Sparks (cnr of Warwick St and Albert St).

WIGAN

Globalisation and American capitalism

Wed 4 Sep, 8pm, Mabs Cross Hotel.

WOOLWICH

How much has Blair changed the Labour Party?

Thu 8 Aug, 7.30pm, Earl of Chatham.

YORK

Drugs: repression and legalisation

Thu 15 Aug, 7.30pm, Priory St Centre.

## Contact socialists near you

Barnsley

☎ 07881 558 590

Birmingham

☎ 07949 028 362

Black Country

☎ 07941 834 125

Bradford

☎ 07811 403 299

Brighton

☎ 07808 368 551

Bristol

☎ 07711 718 519

Cambridge

☎ 07950 142 464

Cardiff

☎ 07815 775 819

Central London

☎ 07957 316 094

Chesterfield

☎ 07881 558 590

Coventry

☎ 07712 047 873

East Anglia

☎ 07946 269 024

East London

☎ 07753 697 743

Exeter

☎ 07939 558 115

Hackney

☎ 07813 135 922

Home Counties

☎ 07905 589 865

Kent

☎ 07761 279 983

Lancashire East

☎ 07968 952 180

Lancashire West

☎ 07931 725 633

Leeds & West Yorkshire

☎ 07734 265 291

Manchester

☎ 07946 413 763

Merseyside

☎ 07951 241 562

North London

☎ 07957 209 057

Norwich

☎ 07733 137 201

Nottingham

☎ 07956 477 778

Plymouth

☎ 07803 620 390

Portsmouth

☎ 07801 290 411

Sheffield

☎ 07965 678 506

South East London

☎ 07951 737 003

South London

☎ 07939 017 973

Southampton

☎ 07811 210 036

Swansea

☎ 07813 809 238

Thames Valley

☎ 07929 618 579

Tyneside

☎ 07866 465 452

Waltham Forest

☎ 07796 697 271

West London

☎ 07958 996 777

York

☎ 07956 237 270

For more details of events phone the SWP national office on 020 7538 5821 or e-mail enquiries@swp.org.uk  
*Socialist Worker* supporters in Scotland are members of the Scottish Socialist Party.  
For events in Scotland phone the SSP on 0141 221 7714.  
Phone the *Socialist Worker* Platform (part of the SSP) 07855 023 739.

## JOIN THE SOCIALISTS

To join the Socialist Workers Party, fill in this form and send it to PO Box 82, London E3 3LH

Name .....

Address .....

Postcode .....Trade union/college/school .....

Phone .....E-mail .....





# news of the world

## Turkey

### Occupation is a spark?

THE FAR right in Turkey held a demonstration last weekend against the government's proposals to lift the death penalty and ease restrictions on Kurdish speakers.

It is a sign of the deepening crisis inside the country.

The prime minister, Bulent Ecevit, is putting the changes forward as part of Turkey's bid to join the European Union (EU).

The crisis in Turkey, a key NATO ally, comes as the US is building up for a war on Iraq in the region.

Turkey's economy is in a mess.

Since last December the representatives of big business have issued warnings to the government about the danger of a "social explosion".

**The media endlessly discuss the possibility of Turkey becoming "the next Argentina".**

Turkey's rulers need a strong government to implement International Monetary Fund (IMF) policies which are hugely unpopular.

Yet the general election in November will not produce this.

The opinion polls are so changeable, and often manipulated, that it is almost pointless to try and predict the election results.

It is even impossible to tell which parties will be in parliament. They need to get 10 percent of the vote nationally to enter parliament, and many of them may not overcome this threshold.

#### Create

There has been no majority government in Turkey since 1989. It has been run by two-party or three-party coalitions, with all the instability and weakness that brings.

This election will be no different.

The attempt to create a new pro-IMF, pro-war, centre-left force led by IMF man Kemal Dervis and pro-EU foreign minister Ismail Cem appears to have foundered before it even took off.

There is huge anger and resentment in the country against the IMF policies the government has implemented for the past three years.

The financial collapse of February 2001 made everyone 50 percent poorer overnight. Everyone knows that the IMF is the problem, not the solution.

Yet all the parties promise more of the same policies.

by a **TURKISH  
SOCIALIST**

The US-led attack on Afghanistan was extremely unpopular here, yet all the parties will happily take part in Bush's next barbarity in Iraq.

Outside parliament the country is like a powder keg. Poverty and unemployment continue to rise.

Some 870 workers occupied the small Pasabahce glass factory when the bosses decided to close it down.

It is in a working class neighbourhood in Istanbul on the shores of the Bosphorus.

#### Daily

The whole neighbourhood is taking part in the occupation, which has turned into a district-wide carnival of the oppressed.

Demonstrations of 10,000 or more take place daily.

Workers have said on national TV, "We know they want to close the factory and sell off the land so they can build luxury villas for the rich."

Another protester said, "This is what IMF policies mean. We had 3,400 people working here."

**"They have whittled us down to 870 and frozen our wages, and none of that was enough to satisfy them."**

Among the thousands of supporters visiting the occupation were the Istanbul Social Forum Initiative which is building for the European Social Forum in Florence, and the Stop the War Platform.

The media are explicitly worrying that this struggle "might be the spark which sets the country alight". It may or may not be.

But the fact that the workers themselves and everyone else are talking about sparks and fires shows how real the possibility of an explosion is.

## Uruguay

WORKERS IN Uruguay's capital, Montevideo, marched during last week's general strike

# Strikers demand food and money

**WORKERS ACROSS Uruguay halted the Latin American country in a general strike on Thursday of last week in protest at the economic meltdown.**

There is a run on the country's currency, and the much vaunted financial sector is crippled.

Many hundreds of Uruguay's 3.3 million people are desperate for food in a country that had one of the region's lowest rates of poverty.

"The strike was unanimously approved by the 42 unions we represent," said Juan Castillo, leader of Uruguay's largest labour movement umbrella group, the PIT-CNT.

Workers walked out on Thursday morning to take part in the strike and join demonstrations against the government.

The government had ordered the closure of banks and cash machines two days previously to stop people withdrawing money from their accounts.

Nervous bank customers then rushed to cash machines to try and

get their money.

The continued bank closures sparked last Thursday's unrest.

There was looting in the capital, Montevideo. The press reported that people broke into supermarkets, bakeries, butchers' shops and pizzerias to get food.

Local newspaper *La Republica* wrote that in one incident about 50 people with black binbags ransacked a self service shop, shouting, "We steal to eat!"

#### Develop

The government sent in 5,000 police officers and two air force helicopters to try and regain control of the capital.

People in Uruguay have suffered three years of recession, which has left one in four unable to afford basic food or pay household bills.

Uruguay was among the first Latin American countries to develop a welfare state. But increasing numbers of people are now unable to afford healthcare insurance.

The economic turmoil is linked to the debt crisis in neighbouring

Argentina and Brazil, and is spreading throughout Latin America.

A surge of opposition to neo-liberalism and privatisation has swept across the region.

People in Peru, Colombia and Bolivia have taken to the streets in protest.

These demonstrations come as the rulers are currently trying to negotiate new loans from the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Uruguay owes billions of dollars to the IMF and World Bank.

There are also fears among the IMF leaders and the US government that Brazil may default on its \$250 billion debt if the leader of Brazil's Workers Party wins presidential elections taking place in October.

Uruguay's economy shrank by 10 percent in the first three months of this year.

**The Uruguayan peso, whose value has halved since the middle of June, plunged even further when foreign exchange controls were lifted.**

The US government is so worried by the crisis and it spreading through the region that it stepped in with a short term loan of \$1.5 billion.

The IMF, Inter-American Development Bank and World Bank backed the US loan and pledged a further \$800 million.

It is the IMF's policies that have ripped Uruguay apart.

The government attacked workers last month by driving through massive tax increases to shore up the country's financial system.

Right wing Uruguayan president Jorge Batlle is also considering imposing further spending cuts.

#### Default

He is forcing through a long term block on people's access to the money in their bank accounts.

He will stop Uruguayans from withdrawing from any fixed term dollar savings accounts in the two state banks for three years.

But Batlle is under pressure. Economy minister Alberto Benson was forced to resign after workers protested against the government imposing an austerity programme.

Batlle's measures are likely to fuel the continued unrest that exploded on the streets last Thursday.



ALL REPORTS MUST BE IN BY 12 NOON MONDAY

## In brief

## Tories' council opposes culture

AROUND 300 people demonstrated in North Finchley, London, on Saturday against the threat from Barnet's Tory council to halt construction of the Community Arts Centre.

Almost the first act of the Tory council that took office in May was to stop the rebuilding of Barnet football ground.

Now they are trying to stop the development of the arts centre that will have a 400-seat theatre, 150-seat studio, dance and drama studios, and venues for use by community groups.

## It's better than a rubbish deal now

A POSSIBLE all-out strike by bin workers in South Gloucestershire has been halted following last-ditch talks between contractor Sita and the TGWU union.

The bin workers had threatened a five-day strike next week after rejecting a 4 percent pay offer as derisory.

But Sita put forward a modified offer that gave a 6 percent increase to the collection teams and 4 percent to office staff and other grades.

Bin workers in South Gloucestershire are still up to £60 a week worse off than their colleagues in Bristol.

## Stores empire is going for India

OVER 1,000 workers at the Reality call centre in Widnes are poised for a strike ballot. The centre is part of the Great Universal Stores empire.

Many other workers across north west England may also be involved.

The company has started sending calls to Bangalore in India when its own system is busy.

Staff are also being asked to go home during "quiet" periods.

Bill Connor, the general secretary of the Usdaw shop workers' union, says, "Ever since calls were diverted abroad, staff have been asked to stand down."

"The company claims this is not linked to outsourcing but our members just don't believe it."

## Revolts from the new authorities

THREE HOUSING organisations in the Southside of Glasgow have written to Scottish first minister Jack McConnell to demand that the planned housing stock transfer is postponed.

Many housing organisations feel they are being manipulated and that all the promises that were made before the ballot in March have not been kept.

A letter from the Southside organisations states that they will "not be exploited for political expediency".

The chaos in Glasgow shows how right it is for people to vote against housing stock transfer and to keep their homes with the council while demanding public investment.

## Lib Dems rat on a promise

PARENTS AND pupils held another lobby of the council in the latest stage to save Anfield comprehensive school in Liverpool last week.

Parents are furious that the Liberal Democrat council is going back on a previous claim that Anfield school would not be merged with nearby Breckfield school to form a City Academy.

Parents are determined to keep up the campaign.

## Northern Ireland

## Belfast rally: 'We are sick of sectarianism'

**SOME 5,000 people joined a protest against sectarianism outside Belfast City Hall in Northern Ireland on Friday of last week.**

The rally was in response to the sectarian murder of a young Catholic man, Gerard Lawlor, by Loyalist paramilitaries.

The Loyalist death squad, the Ulster Freedom Fighters, appeared on TV wearing balacavas and combat gear and wielding guns, claiming responsibility for the murder.

The protest reflected how sick most workers are of continued sectarian violence.

As Tony McGuire from the Fire Brigades Union put it, "We need the working class, the trade unions, to show that people on the ground aren't prepared to tolerate the murder of an innocent young lad."

Top politicians and the press try to claim that Loyalists and Republicans are equally to blame for the violence in Northern Ireland.

But even a recent report by the Police Service of Northern Ireland (the renamed RUC) found that the overwhelming majority of sectarian killings were carried out by Loyalist paramilitaries.

Last week's rally was called and organised by Belfast City Council and Sinn Féin mayor Alex Maskey, and supported

by all the main political parties (except Ian Paisley's DUP).

On Thursday of last week 900 social service workers in the North and West Belfast NHS Trust, members of the Nipsa public service union, struck for 24 hours after a worker received a death threat. A Loyalist terror gang had sent the worker a bullet in the post.

**Some 400 workers held a rally outside Transport House in Belfast.**

They expressed fury at the death threat, but also at the lack of resources they have for working in the frontline of both violence and severe social deprivation.

Unionist and Loyalist politicians attacked the strikes.

Loyalist assembly member

Billy Hutchinson of the PUP party said, "I'm fed up of the unions taking decisions on a whim and which are for one side of the community."

Last weekend postal workers at the Great James Street delivery office in Derry walked out for 48 hours after a worker received a death threat from the Loyalist "Red Hand Defenders".

In February postal workers struck after a threatening letter against 11 workers from the "Waterside Young Loyalists", warning workers not to enter the Waterside Protestant area of the city.

The recent strikes give a glimpse of the way sectarianism in Northern Ireland can be challenged from below.

## Socialist Alliance

**THE SOCIALIST Alliance in Hackney, east London, has unanimously selected Paul Foot to stand for mayor of Hackney in the election to be held on Thursday 17 October.**

**This will be an important election campaign for the Socialist Alliance in London and beyond. In the May council elections the Socialist Alliance performed well in Hackney.**

**Paul Foot's campaign is aimed at the many people in**

**the borough who want a fight-back against New Labour's policies locally, nationally and internationally.**

**The campaign will strongly feature opposition to the war on Iraq and racism, as well as total opposition to privatisation and low pay.**

**It can be a broadly-based, colourful and lively campaign which will begin to offer hope to those who have written off the major parties.**

## Journalists

**MORE THAN 100 journalists on the Newcastle Chronicle and Journal struck on Thursday of last week as part of their continuing fight for a fair wage.**

This is their second one-day strike.

More action is planned—journalists will walk out again for two days on Friday and Saturday this week. Those two days will badly hit a planned relaunch of the group's *Sunday Sun* on August 11.

Bosses have offered just a 2 percent rise. Under the latest proposals graduate trainees in Newcastle will start on £12,250 per year, compared to a reported average graduate starting salary of £19,000.

The paper is part of the giant Trinity Mirror group.

According to the latest accounts the Newcastle titles made an operating profit of £13.2 million on a turnover of

£52 million.

*Chronicle and Journal* boss Steve Brown has 116,738 share options on Trinity Mirror, the group that owns them.

**■ Send donations and messages of support to 11 Trinity Courtyard, Newcastle NE6 1TS. E-mail the union branch on geomacstg@onyxnet.co.uk**

## Rotherham

**MEMBERS OF the National Union of Journalists at the Rotherham Advertiser have voted to strike over pay.**

**The ballot result was 77 percent for strike action and 92 percent for action short of a strike.**

**Union members were to meet later this week to discuss what action they should now take.**

## Obituary

## Leslie Osborne

COMRADES WHO knew Les will be sad to learn that he died on 30 July.

Above all, Les believed in being an activist.

He had been a car worker at the Longbridge plant in Birmingham in the 1970s and early 1980s, and after he retired he became one of the mainstays of his local Socialist Workers Party branch in the city.

Les took his politics very seriously, and would turn up for

## Waste plant protest



**ABOUT 60 campaigners lobbied councillors in Caerphilly in Wales last week against a proposed waste recycling plant being built on their doorstep.**

**Over 2,500 local residents have signed a petition against the plant planned for the Risca quarry.**

**The giant conglomerate Hanson, which made a**

**fortune from electricity privatisation, is behind the scheme.**

**The plans are next due to be discussed at a council planning meeting on 15 August.**

## Air traffic control

AIR TRAFFIC controllers warn that financial crises and staff shortages are creating a "very real risk" to safety.

David Luxton, national secretary of the controllers' Prospect union, wrote to transport secretary Alistair Darling outlining their fears last week.

He called for "immediate government intervention". It was the New Labour government which privatised National Air Traffic Services (NATS), in breach of a pledge made before the 1997 election.

NATS, now owned by a consortium of airlines, has demanded more and more money from the government, but the service is getting worse.

Leaked papers from the Swanick air traffic control centre reveal that this year NATS has already filed double the number of "overload reports" it made for the whole of 2001.

Controllers make the reports when they believe safety is being compromised because they have too many planes to deal with.

There is also a shortage of about 100 controllers. The company's answer is to offer bonuses for working seven hour long overtime shifts.

There is only one other privatised air traffic control system in Europe, in Switzerland.

It was responsible for the mid-air collision last month between a cargo plane and a Russian airliner.

## Asylum rights

SUPPORTERS OF three campaigns against deportation protested outside the Home Office on Thursday of last week.

The campaigns called a joint protest to draw attention to threats to deport three families.

●**Farid and Feriba Ahmad**, asylum seekers from Afghanistan, were removed from sanctuary in a mosque in Lye, West Midlands, last week after police and immigration officers smashed their way in during an early morning raid.

The Ahmads and their two young children, Seera and Hadia, now face removal to Germany—from where they fled last year having suffered racist persecution.

If they are returned to Germany they will almost certainly be sent back to Afghanistan.

They are currently held in Harmondsworth detention centre near Heathrow.

●**Aziz Ahmed**, a refugee from Pemba, east Africa, has been in detention for over a year in different British detention centres, including Yarls Wood and Harmondsworth.

On 13 June last year Aziz

and his wife, Husna, and four year old daughter, Asya, went to Lunar House in Croydon, where Aziz claimed asylum for all of them.

They were all fingerprinted and photographed.

Aziz was then separated from his wife and child, and taken for his immigration interview.

He has not seen or heard from them since.

Have they been quietly deported or abducted? Who knows?

Aziz has been locked up since then and unable to search for them.

●**Yurdugal Ay**, a Kurdish woman from Turkey, and her four children are fighting deportation from Britain.

The Home Office sent her husband back to Germany, supposedly a "safe third country", some time ago.

On 11 May German officials deported him to Istanbul in Turkey.

Since then there has been no news of him.

Yurdugal Ay and her children are now held at Dungavel in Scotland.



## Thursday 8 August

●Defending union democracy. PCS victory rally, 7pm, Merseyside Trade Union Centre, Hardman Street, Liverpool. Speakers include Mark Serwotka (PCS) and Derek Simpson (Amicus).

## Until Sunday 11 August

●*Crisis*: an exhibition of anti-capitalist photos by Jess Hurd and Alke Schmidt at Vaults@The Foundry, Great Eastern Street, London (Old Street ☺).

## Saturday 31 August

●Another World is Possible festival, 1pm-9pm, Tankerton Slopes, Whitstable, Kent.

## Sunday 1 September

●Love Music—Hate Racism carnival. Features Ms Dynamite, Doves and many others. Phone 020 7924 0333.

## Saturday 28 September

●Stop the War Coalition national demonstration. Assemble 1pm, Hyde Park, London. Supported by CND. Phone 07951 235 915 or go to www.stopwar.org.uk

## Saturday 12 October

●Socialist Alliance conference on the euro, South Camden Community School, Charrington Street, London. Phone 020 7791 3138.

## Thursday 7 November-Saturday 9 November

●European Social Forum, Florence, Italy. Phone Globalise Resistance on 020 8980 3005 or go to www.resist.org.uk for transport and booking details.

## Rail workers

□RAIL WORKERS on First North Western trains (FNW) have won a victory.

They called off a series of strikes planned for this week after the 1,000 workers won a pay rise of 3.5 percent.

RMT members also won a 35-hour week by September 2003 as part of a three-year deal.

These issues have been the subject of negotiations since 1999. The threat of strikes made the difference.

□ARRIVA RAIL workers are set to strike on Wednesday 21 August.

The RMT members on

Arriva trains have been involved in strike action for seven months in their fight for fair pay.

■**Send donations and messages of support for the rail strikers to RMT, Unity House, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1.**

□PAT SIKORSKI from the RMT No 3 Camden branch has won the election for the assistant general secretary of the RMT union.

His victory reflects the continued shift of the union that was seen with the election of Bob Crow as general secretary.



ALL REPORTS MUST BE IN BY 12 NOON MONDAY

## Health workers

# Firm stand over pay in Glasgow

ABOUT 300 workers employed by the private contractor Sodexho at Glasgow Royal Infirmary struck for three days this week over pay.

This follows a two-day strike last week. Strikers picketed the hospital enthusiastically and showed they are solidly behind the strike.

One of the pickets told *Socialist Worker*, "We're sick of low pay and being pushed around by this management."

"Those on strike are porters, domestics, and catering and security staff. We are an important part of the NHS and we deserve to get a decent rate of pay."

The workers are demanding the restoration of full NHS terms and conditions, £5 an hour minimum wage, a rise of 5 percent or £1,000, and a 35-hour week.

At present workers get as little as £4.20 an hour, with minimal sick pay and no shift allowances.

Yet Sodexho's chief executive, Pierre Bellon, has estimated personal wealth of £1.3 billion.

**Sodexho is a multinational company which profited from the asylum voucher system.**

It is involved in private prisons and detention centres.

Management cynically planned to try and undermine the strike with scab labour from across Britain. They flew people from Liverpool, Ipswich and other areas.

Some were brought from Fife and Gleneagles. They were put up in hotels and paid £10 an hour, well over double the pay of normal workers.

Carolyn Leckie, the



OVER 150 pickets covered all 15 entrances of Glasgow Royal Infirmary on Tuesday this week, stopping many non-essential deliveries from getting in

branch secretary of North Glasgow Hospitals Unison union, says, "Despite massive efforts by Sodexho to nullify the strike, they failed miserably. We ensured that many scabs were unsuccessful in entering the hospital."

"We believe that some who had entered on Tuesday refused to go back on Wednesday. We were approaching 100 percent successful in persuading delivery drivers with non-essential goods not to cross the picket line."

**■ Send donations, messages of support and cheques (payable to The Strike Hardship Fund), c/o Kathy McLean, Treasurer, Unison North Glasgow Hospitals Branch, Cuthbertson Building, Glasgow Royal Infirmary, G4 0SF.**

## Phil Billows

### Still no charges made

HEALTH WORKERS at the Barts and Royal London Hospital Trust in east London are waiting for management to produce an official list of charges against their Unison union branch secretary Phil Billows.

Trust bosses suspended Phil from his job over a month ago.

But they have still not finished their "investigation" into his conduct.

Phil has been at the forefront of the fight against the PFI scheme at the hospital trust.

Unison members recently re-elected Phil as their branch secretary on a platform of fighting against the PFI scheme.

Disgracefully management have changed the locks on the

union office.

Section meetings have now taken place throughout the trust. All sections have indicated they would be prepared to strike if Phil is dismissed.

Phil has been offered the full backing of the union nationally and across London.

## Support

The London region is organising a rally to defend Phil and the union at the end of this month.

The union branch is also appealing for financial support and messages of solidarity from other workplaces.

**■ Send donations and messages of support to Union Office, Royal London Hospital, Whitechapel, London E1 1BB.**

## Airports

THE GMB union is recommending that members at key airports accept an improved pay offer.

Airport baggage handlers and check-in staff employed by Aviance have already rejected two pay offers.

They were poised to stage a series of one-day strikes later this month after voting nine to one for action.

The GMB has not disclosed details of the latest offer, except to say that it is "substantially improved".

**□ SEVERAL thousand workers at the British Airports Authority are rebalancing over pay.**

The staff—technical, operational and general—rejected a first offer and are now considering a marginally improved new one.

However, it is also tied to accepting a two-year deal.

## Westminster council

# More sections join walkout

"WE'RE FIGHTING to save our jobs, save our pensions and to not be privatised."

That is how Nicky, a striker and Unison union member at Tory-controlled Westminster council, central London, summed up the battle to stop the wholesale privatisation of services.

Nicky, along with 76 other members of the parking department at the council, has been out on strike for three weeks.

They have been joined, in a rolling escalation of strikes, by other sections of the council.

Twenty five workers in the planning department joined the strike last week and are still out.

Seven workers in the commercial waste department struck for five days last week.

And this week 80 workers in the environmental health department joined the action.

Some 50 of the striking workers picketed on Tuesday morning.

These workers say they are going to mount 24-hour pickets.

Workers in the planning department who are not on strike are working to rule.

But this week they decided to join their colleagues on strike.

Nicky, a call centre worker, says, "Under privatisation most staff here will be transferred to the private consortium, Vertex SW1."

"Privatisation equals cost cutting. Nothing is guaranteed for staff or for the public."

The strike has already had an impact.

**Management have put back the transfer of services to the private consortium until November.**

Now workers are determined to keep escalating the action.

Unison shop steward Robert Wong told *Socialist Worker*, "I've worked in Parktel for five years."

"The privatisation of our department is like a green light for all the staff to be transferred to the private sector."

"We are all worried about being employed by a private contractor which is listed on the stock market."

"The main concern for these stock market companies is making a profit at the expense of everything else, especially staff."

"Once they transfer us anything can happen—new contracts, restructuring."

"We could wave goodbye to our pensions and our rights."

"I'm so angry about what is happening, and proud that we have decided to fight."

"We want every worker who can to support our fight, because we are not just fighting for ourselves."

Westminster strikers have been picketing and leafleting to win support, and on Monday of this week they were joined by Unison members from other councils.

John McLoughlin from Tower Hamlets Unison brought money raised around his workplace.

## Prouder

He told strikers, "Last week I was proud to hand over a £500 donation from our branch."

"This week I'm even prouder to give £475 which was collected in just one hour from workers at the council on Friday afternoon."

"We had put a leaflet around the day before letting them know about the strike."

"Anyone standing up to privatisation can get this kind of support in any workplace," he added.

The Westminster strikers are planning to organise delegations this week to local workplaces to raise solidarity.

They are urging trade unionists to get behind their fight through doing workplace collections and inviting strikers to speak.

They are also asking other union branches to adopt one of the departments which are striking or set to strike under the programme of rolling action.

**■ For details of how to raise solidarity, and to send donations, contact Westminster Unison, First Floor South, Westminster City Hall, 64 Victoria Street, London SW1E 6QP. Phone 020 7641 2389 or 07956 579 466. E-mail unison@westminster.gov.uk**

## Postal workers

# Chance to stamp on sell-off

PRESSURE FROM below has pushed the leaders of the Communication Workers Union to call a strike ballot over the privatisation of Romec, the Post Office's cleaning and buildings maintenance section.

In just over two weeks time, on 27 August, all 180,000 postal workers will begin a strike vote.

It will cover Royal Mail, Parcelforce and high street Post Office staff.

Management wants to transfer Romec into a joint venture with Balfour Beatty.

If 7,000 Romec workers are handed over to private management, how long before tens of thousands of others go the same way?

CWU general secretary Billy Hayes says:

"If this joint venture goes ahead loyal and typically long-serving employees will have their pensions threatened, their job security put at risk and their trade union representation put in jeopardy."

"It amounts to a charter for employers to side step agreements they have reached with trade unions."

## Sweeps

Resistance against the Romec joint venture can be a big step towards throwing back the privatisation offensive by Post Office bosses.

For too long CWU leaders have hesitated to start real resistance to the bosses' and government's programme.

Now is a chance to fight

alongside others as a new mood of resistance sweeps through the public sector.

The firefighters' union is holding a special conference on 12 September—the date the post workers' ballot result is due to be announced.

For the last few years postal workers have taken the lead in using strikes to defend their conditions and union organisation.

It would be tragic if, just when other people start to hit back, they run away from the battlefield.

Every CWU member should throw themselves into getting the biggest possible yes vote for strikes and then push the union leaders to call immediate, effective action to stop privatisation in its tracks.

## Firefighters

THE FIRE Brigades Union has called three further major demonstrations and rallies as its 55,000 members move to ballot for strike action over pay.

There will be demonstrations in Swansea on Saturday 17 August, in Belfast on 24 August, and a rally in London on 2 September.

A final meeting with the employers, who spurned calls for an increase in firefighters' pay to £30,000 a year, will take place at the beginning of September.

FBU leaders, activists and members all anticipate that there will be no movement from the employers or the government by then.

A recalled conference of the union is to take place in Manchester on 12 September—the week of the TUC congress—to hear recommendations for an immediate strike ballot.



FIREFIGHTERS ON a recent demonstration in Glasgow

## International solidarity

PROTESTERS will gather outside the South African embassy on Thursday next week in solidarity with 87 anti-privatisation activists from the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee.

The 87, including renowned militant Trevor Ngwane, will be hauled before a court in Johannesburg on that day.

They are accused of public violence, assault with intent to do grievous bodily harm and malicious damage to property after a demonstration outside the mayor's house in protest at electricity cut-offs in the city.

The protest in London, called by Globalise Resistance and backed by War on Want, is part of an international day of action.

**■ Protest, Thursday 15 August, 4.30pm (until at least 6pm), South Africa House, Trafalgar Square (Charing Cross or Leicester Square ☉).**



# Socialist Worker

## The strikes shook New Labour and council bosses

# This is no time to stop fight for pay

**UNION LEADERS called off the strikes of over one million public sector workers on Monday of this week after they struck a deal with council bosses.**

The leaders of Unison, the TGWU and the GMB called off all strike action for six weeks after bosses were forced to slightly improve their previous offer of a 3 percent pay rise.

This is despite the fact that they had previously refused to offer anything to council workers and said anything more than 3 percent was “pie in the sky”.

But the offer falls far short of what council workers deserve and what could have been won.

Last month's successful one-day strike had put the council bosses and the government on the defensive.

**The only reason the bosses came to the negotiating table at all was because of the size and unity of the huge national strike by council workers on 17 July.**

Both the government and the bosses were terrified of another display of workers' strength and solidarity on the next planned strike on 14 August.

But instead of keeping this pressure up and going flat out to win a 6 percent rise for all council workers, union leaders have thrown in the towel just when the bosses were on the run.

If union leaders had built on the brilliant unity and spirit of the last strike, and called more national action, they could have forced the bosses to crumble and meet the council workers' demand for 6 percent.

Instead union leaders have settled for a deal which leaves thousands of workers in poverty and is tied to a minimal rise for the next two years.

This is the time to fight, not to settle for compromises that still leave the majority of workers on poverty pay.

**The government is facing pressure over pay across the public sector.**

Workers are sick to death of the injustice of low pay for doing vital public service jobs.

Postal workers will soon begin a strike ballot over privatisation, with the result due on 12 September.

On the same day firefighters in the FBU union will hold a special

**‘Last month's successful one-day strike had put the council bosses and the government on the defensive’**

conference to discuss strikes over pay.

They are demanding £30,000 a year as a just reward for their job and to meet the rising costs of living.

The government is pushing employers to offer two-year or three-year deals because it wants to nip these forthcoming struggles in the bud.

But two-year and three-year deals are bad news for workers.

### ‘Reform’

They tie workers to a set rise at a time when recession is just around the corner and when rents and mortgage repayments continue to go through the roof.

As council worker Richard Gurney, from Bath and North East Somerset Unison, puts it, “Low paid workers already feel vulnerable.

“They are sceptical of two-year or three-year deals. You only have to look at the falling money markets and the precarious state of jobs and the economy.

“Where will that put council workers in two years time?”

The government also wants to bind such deals to what it calls “reform”—which for staff means harder work, privatisation and greater flexibility on the bosses' terms.

Education secretary Estelle Morris tied the offer of a three-year deal for teachers to harder work and performance related pay last week.



**STRIKING COUNCIL workers show their confidence**

She said, “Pay progression should be linked to greater challenge for the individual.”

**That means forcing already overworked teachers to jump through even more hoops to get a decent rise.**

Last month's council workers' strike showed that it is united and national action which terrifies the bosses and can force them to make concessions.

This week's deal also shows that workers cannot rely on union leaders to fight to the end.

During the six week consultation period council workers should campaign and argue to throw this deal out.

It is vital to build and strengthen rank and file organisation from below that can put maximum pressure to win victory over pay.

## What is the deal on offer?

**THE FULL details and fine print of the deal were not known when *Socialist Worker* went to press.**

But it seems the council bosses' offer involves a 3 percent rise or a minimum wage of £5 an hour backdated to April 2002.

Workers will get another 1 percent increase in October, with an additional 1 percent for the very low paid.

The offer includes another 3.5 percent increase from next April, with another additional 1 percent for the very low paid.

Union leaders have hailed the deal as a major breakthrough.

Jack Dromey from the TGWU called it a “just settlement for the low paid”.

“An army of low paid, part time women workers will crash through the £5 an hour barrier,” he said.

But many workers will be bitterly disappointed.

The deal comes nowhere near to ending low pay, and is far short of the 6 percent rise workers were demanding.

**Some 275,000 council workers currently get less than £5 an hour.**

But for many of these workers the new deal means a rise of just 50p an hour over the next two years.

Yet some fat cat council chiefs are already fuming at this offer, and are threatening to leave vacancies open or make cuts.

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ISSN 1475-9705